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Cities of Dreams and Despair: Utopia and Dystopia in Contemporary Brazilian Film and Literature

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Cities of Dreams and Despair:

Utopia and Dystopia in Contemporary Brazilian Film and Literature

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Hispanic Languages and Literatures

by

Benjamin David Burt

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Cities of Dreams and Despair:

Utopia and Dystopia in Contemporary Brazilian Film and Literature

by

Benjamin David Burt

Doctor of Philosophy in Hispanic

Language and Literatures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2020

Professor John Randal Johnson, Co-Chair

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This dissertation employs a theoretical framework rooted in utopian studies to examine the role of utopia, dystopia, and related concepts in literary and cinematic depictions of Brasília and São Paulo since 1980. By centering the concept of utopianism, understood broadly as "social dreaming," this project departs from idealized or mythologized representations of Brazil and focuses instead on hopeful imagination. Though national cultural production long reflected optimistic myths about Brazil and its territory, the military dictatorship of 1964-1985 heralded a turn towards pessimism and dystopian aesthetics. Brazilian artists of the current, democratic period negotiate these dual legacies in a predominantly urban society during an era of global

skepticism about utopia. While references to Brazil and its cities as utopian or dystopian abound in recent criticism, this dissertation is among the first projects to analyze contemporary cultural production through the lens of utopian studies. Consequently, the primary objectives of this study include surveying the role of utopianism and correlated concepts in recent film and literature, identifying trends among the included works, and considering techniques used to evoke these concepts.

My choice of focal cities facilitates comparative analysis of the influence of local history, culture, geography, and urbanism on utopian thought. Whereas Brasília remains closely tied to both utopian yearning and dystopia, critics rarely associate São Paulo explicitly with either concept despite the megacity's simultaneous embodiment of wealth, dynamism, chaos, and division. The selected texts representing both cities most often respond to a shared baseline of disillusionment with cautious hopefulness. Allegorical and realist dystopian aesthetics remain influential, as does the limited, critical desire outlined in Haroldo de Campos's theory of post-utopian poetry. Few texts embrace a fatalistic, anti-utopian outlook, while hopeful perspectives breaking meaningfully with the status quo are likewise uncommon. The Federal District is a more frequent site of radical utopianism as authors and filmmakers draw from Brasília's history of revolutionary aspiration, whereas such ambition is almost entirely absent from the included works centered on São Paulo. Despite this divergence, however, texts using dystopia or post-utopia to critique specific social or ideological phenomena predominate among the included representations of both cities.

The dissertation of Benjamin David Burt is approved.

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INTRODUCTION

"Basta olhar à nossa volta para termos certeza: o apocalipse é aqui e agora," writes Tatiana Salem Levy in the introduction to her 2017 essay collection *O mundo não vai acabar* (9). Despite this initially fatalistic view of contemporary Brazilian society, the author later calls for renewed utopianism: "Muita gente dirá que . . . a utopia, assim como a democracia, é um conceito falido. Mas aí eu pergunto: se não formos utópicos, como sobreviver? Se não acreditarmos no melhor dos mundos, de que vale estarmos aqui?" (14). This contest between resignation and hopefulness is the central dynamic explored in this dissertation. On the one hand, ongoing socioeconomic inequality, violence, and authoritarian politics frequently make life in Brazil seem dystopian. On the other, the Brazilian territory's centuries-long association with the concepts of utopia and paradise continues to inspire belief in a better future.

Using a theoretical framework rooted in utopian studies, I analyze the diverse manifestations and functions of utopia and dystopia in Brazilian literature and cinema produced since 1980. My historical focus centers the current, democratic era yet incorporates certain highly impactful, earlier texts and films produced as the military dictatorship of 1964-1985 moved slowly towards redemocratization. While my research relies on existing criticism considering Brazil's ties to the idea of utopia, there is relatively little literature to date that foregrounds the primary theorists associated with utopian studies. As a result, my primary objectives in this dissertation include surveying the place of utopia and correlated concepts in recent artistic production and highlighting literary and cinematic techniques employed to evoke

these ideas. Throughout, I consider credence and disbelief in utopian thought as a critical method and potential engine for social change in the context of the various texts' fictional societies.[1]

Within the broad panorama of relevant works released during the selected period, I chose to focus on depictions of cities. Despite Brazil's transformation into a predominantly urban nation during the twentieth century, as reflected in the primacy of urban narratives in recent literature and film, few critical texts consider the nation's metropolises as loci of utopian and dystopian thinking and representation. Although preliminary research identified several cities whose recent literary and cinematic production merit exploration in an expanded version of this study, I focus on depictions of Brasília and São Paulo.[2] Brasília was a logical option given that the city's creators explicitly described it as a utopian space capable of inspiring widespread social and political transformation. In the years since its inauguration in 1960, however, the capital has acquired a reputation as an alienating, segregated, and dystopian city. While infrequently hailed as utopian, São Paulo provides an interesting point of comparison with the planned capital. This Brazilian megacity's stark contrasts and social divisions provide ample opportunity for critique rooted in utopian thought. The choice of Brasília and São Paulo also allows for consideration of the interactions of utopia, dystopia, and urban space in two very

[1] Though I do not consider the interaction between fictional utopianism and real social dreaming at length in this dissertation, a future study centered on this relationship would likely produce interesting conclusions. As Richard Gerrig details in *Experiencing Narrative Worlds* (1993), the cognitive borders between fiction, non-fiction, and reality are more porous than they might appear. A study drawing from Gerrig, Peter Lamarque and Stein Haugom Olsen's *Truth, Fiction, and Literature* (1994), and subsequent works centered on the cognitive value of artistic production could provide new insight into the dynamic between intra- and extratextual forms of utopian thinking in contemporary Brazil and beyond.

[2] I am confident that sufficient material exists for a utopian studies analysis of literary and cinematic depictions of Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, and Porto Alegre. Most likely, there is also enough for similar studies of Fortaleza and Salvador.

different cities, a concept largely absent from a critical corpus focusing primarily on the utopian potential of Brazil's territory and nature.

Theoretical Framework: Thinking about Utopia

Utopia's multiple meanings and connotations provide a notorious challenge for critics. Depending on one's temporal, social, and political position, utopia can signify concepts as diverse as perfection, hopeful thinking, unrealistic aspiration, or totalitarian depravity. A utopian studies framework offers an interdisciplinary methodological approach to this concept that strives to avoid historical or social bias in its analysis. The concept of utopianism, synonymous with utopian thought, has proven particularly salient for this field. Although a singular definition of utopian thought remains elusive, Lyman Tower Sargent's understanding of the concept as "social dreaming," that is, "the dreams and nightmares that concern the ways in which groups of people arrange their lives," effectively unites utopia across historical eras and academic disciplines ("The Three" 3).[3] Even within the specific social and historical context of contemporary Brazil, this broad understanding of utopianism encourages an inclusive vision of utopian aspiration. With this intention in mind, this section presents a brief historical overview of utopianism with special attention paid to concepts relevant to the included literary and cinematic works.

In his monograph on the subject, Gregory Claeys proposes that utopia encompasses three domains: utopian thought, utopian literature, and utopian communities (*Searching* 11). Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) gave name to the concept and provided a blueprint for the literary genre,

[3] For Michael J. Griffin and Tom Moylan, social dreaming is most effective when it "unleashes and informs efforts to make the world a better place, not to the letter of a plan but to the spirt of an open-ended research process" (11).

yet utopian thinking far precedes this text's publication. Pre-modern examples of utopia include myths of past Golden Ages, imagined societies (as in Plato's *Republic* [c. 380 BC]), and religious paradises including the Christian heaven (Claeys, *Searching* 7-8). For Claeys, More's book draws from these earlier ideas' tendency to "privileg[e] the communal, usually by making property and social classes much more equal. This equality is the crucial social dogma often regarded as definitive of the utopian agenda" (*Searching* 9). *Utopia*'s continued influence is due in part to its title, a clever neologism alluding to the Greek terms for "no place" and "a happy place." Further, the work's bipartite structure foregrounding a comparative social critique between sixteenth-century England and the titular island kingdom establishes a framework recurrent in later utopian texts.[4] Through conversations between a fictionalized narrator named Thomas More and the Portuguese sailor Raphael Hytholoday (and More's friend Peter Giles), the author More carves a stark contrast between the hierarchical and exploitative nature of his own society and the egalitarian, communitarian land of Utopia. For John Storey, "the book establishes an ideal mode of utopian reading; that is, reading the here and now against the imagined. In other words, the critical focus is not on the social arrangements of the imagined island, it is on the society from where Utopia is imagined" (21). Rather than listing the characteristics of an idealized society, *Utopia* encourages social dreaming through juxtaposing what is with what could be. Though More describes Utopia as a real place in the Western Hemisphere, the book's comparative ethos implicitly challenges the reader to reshape their own society.

[4] More wrote the original text in Latin. Its long title translates to *On the Best State of a Commonwealth and the New Island of Utopia. A Truly Golden Handbook No Less Beneficial than Entertaining*.

The first utopian narratives after More similarly portray utopia as an existing place awaiting discovery while tacitly encouraging social change.[5] The next major trend in utopian literature occurred when increasing geographical knowledge and Enlightenment belief in progress sparked a shift towards what Fátima Vieira terms "euchronia" or utopian narratives set in the future (9).[6] Spurred by this belief in human progress, the so-called utopian socialists of the nineteenth century hoped to create their own utopian communities through careful planning.[7] While Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels criticized what they termed utopian (meaning unrealistic or unachievable) socialism, the pair drew inspiration from the idea of imagining and working towards an improved future through critical analysis of the present (Storey 24).[8]

Much of twentieth century history undercut belief in utopia as a realizable objective. Socioeconomic inequality remained severe, new technologies wreaked previously impossible levels of destruction, and supposedly egalitarian sociopolitical systems succumbed to authoritarianism. In the wake of World War II, authors including Karl Popper, Hannah Arendt, and Isaiah Berlin argued that utopia is a prescriptive, coercive formula inevitably resulting in oppression. In his study of this liberal, anti-utopian philosophy, Russell Jacoby describes how, "The anti-utopian ethos has swept all intellectual quarters. Utopia has lost its ties with alluring

[5] Examples include Tommaso Campanella's *The City of the Sun* (1623) and Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627).

[6] A key example is Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *L'An 2440* (1771).

[7] The best-known utopian socialists include Robert Owen, Henri de Saint-Simon, and Charles Fourier.

[8] Carl Freedman, Ruth Levitas, and F. Vieira (among others) all affirm the importance of utopianism in Marxism, while literary works including Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888) and William Morris's *News from Nowhere* (1890) mirror Marx's vision of communitarian utopia achieved through critique and collective action.

visions of harmony and has turned into a threat. Conventional and scholarly wisdom associates utopian ideas with violence and dictatorship" (81).[9] Frederic Jameson in *Archaeologies of the Present* and David Harvey in *Spaces of Hope* likewise argue that anti-utopianism remained widespread as neoliberal socioeconomic policies took hold beginning in the 1970s. As exemplified by Margaret Thatcher's maxim that "there is no alternative" (TINA) and the hegemony of liberal democracy heralded by Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), conventional thinking identified social dreaming with futility or potential disaster. For Zygmunt Bauman and Leonidas Donskis, TINA serves as an ideal metaphor for contemporary "liquid evil" and its drive, "to strip humanity of its dreams, alternative projects and powers of dissent," and install a society defined by control, surveillance, and fatalism (1-19). Despite the prevalence of anti-utopianism, however, utopian thinking has retained power as a critical tool and source of inspiration for critics, thinkers, and activists seeking to reimagine the social and ideological status quo.[10]

The work of Marxist scholar Ernst Bloch is fundamental for contemporary understandings of utopianism. In his long career, Bloch developed an understanding of utopian yearning as a universal impulse to transcend one's material and historical circumstances. The critic's *magnum opus*, the three-volume *The Principle of Hope* (1954-1959), analyzes manifestations of this utopian drive in a wide range of social and cultural forms including

[9] Fátima Vieira traces the origins of anti-utopia to eighteenth century authors who mock or denounce the validity of utopian yearning, naming Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726) as an example (8).

[10] A recent counterexample is Elana Gomel's *Narrative Space and Time: Representing Impossible Topologies in Literature* (2014), wherein the author considers literary utopias as a repressive chronotope dotted with heterotopias revealing their depravity.

daydreams, fairy tales, popular culture, literature, philosophy, and religion.[11] For Carl Freedman, the critic's hermeneutic approach to this vast corpus "construes fragmentary prefigurations of an unalienated (communist) future in the cultural artifacts of the past and present" (63-64). The creators of these artifacts undergo a process of "learning hope," whereby they come to appreciate that change is a possibility (Bloch 3). Upon attaining "educated hope," the same individual understands change as realizable, at least in the long term (Bloch 7). To Douglas Kellner, Bloch's mapping of aspiration positions utopia as a "paradigm of 'intra-historical transcendence,'" connecting the analyzed array of desires across time and place: "utopian elements are grounded in a cultural tradition and historical situation, and thus point to a better future in which long-held wishes and dreams for freedom, happiness, and justice can be realized" (95). The utopian impulse is ubiquitous, yet its manifestations in cultural production and subsequent interpretation by critics require a degree of educated hope.

Bloch considers all forms of utopian thought more valuable than apathy or pessimism but divides utopianism into two categories. Concrete utopia requires educated hope and strives to reshape social organization. This variety of aspiration fulfills what Ruth Levitas calls "the essential utopian function, that of simultaneously anticipating and effecting the future" (15). Abstract utopian thought, on the other hand, includes desires disengaged from any larger project of change. For Levitas, "Abstract utopia is fantastic and compensatory. It is wishful thinking, but the wish is not accompanied by a will to change anything. In the day-dream, it often involves not so much a transformed future, but a future where the world remains as it is except for the

[11] The delay between the publication of *The Principle of Hope* and its penetration in wider academic circles is explained by the lack of an English translation until 1986 and what Wayne Hudson calls Bloch's preference for implicit responses to the central questions of his work (25).

dreamer's changed place in it" (15). While marked by the utopian impulse, this strain of aspiration lacks the critical engagement and hope for material change implicit in its counterpart.

Contemporary theorists have identified a further subdivision within the field of concrete utopia relevant to the Brazilian texts and films analyzed in this dissertation. On the one hand, cultural critics identify a more sweeping variety of aspiration. Jacoby juxtaposes "iconoclastic utopias" rooted in mysticism and the Jewish intellectual tradition with "blueprint utopias" whose rigidity and prescriptive function too often leads to authoritarianism. The critic identifies a radical inventiveness and resistance to dogma shared by thinkers like Bloch, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse, noting that, "The iconoclastic utopians tapped ideas traditionally associated with utopia—harmony, leisure, peace, and pleasure—but rather than spelling out what could be, they kept, as it were, their ears open toward it" (33-35). Although Jacoby convincingly highlights the reductive nature of the liberal anti-utopian critique, Krishan Kumar argues that his "over-generous" definition risks disconnecting utopianism from the social or historical context of its expression (118).

Storey's concept of "radical utopianism" seeks to reconcile exuberant hopefulness with a close focus on the present. This form of yearning generates hope through a commitment to defamiliarizing the present that, "gives us the resources to imagine the future in a different way and in so doing we begin to unfold our complicity with the 'inevitability' and 'naturalness' of the present" (12).[12] Such revelations indicate avenues of near-term change within a given social and

[12] For Storey, the opposite pole is "blueprint utopianism" disconnected from historical analysis of the present (2). The critic also argues against Jacoby's foregrounding of explicit social prescription in his use of this term, instead pointing out that the difference between radical and blueprint utopian thought, "is a matter of emphasis, rather than a clear distinction between good and bad utopianism" (13).

historical context while revealing "new horizons of conceivable possibility" (Storey 6). The potential implications of such a vision include overcoming anti-utopian hegemony:

> Radical utopianism . . . broadens our vision of the world and opens up new ways of seeing. As the familiar is defamiliarized, what we have learned to think of as immutable suddenly looks changeable and the capitalist dogma *There Is No Alternative* can begin to give way to the enabling slogan *Another World Is Possible*. (xi-xii)

The validity of social and political forms other than neoliberal democracy remains in doubt in a period where TINA has achieved widespread influence. Through imagination and critique, however, a radical utopian thinker can perceive desirable alternatives and strive to make them reality.

Jameson likewise views utopianism as foundational for conceiving alternatives to the sociopolitical status quo. Though he foregoes differentiation between types of utopian thought, the critic's understanding of the term approximates radical utopianism. For Jameson, the power of such thinking is especially potent in an era when fundamental change appears unlikely:

> What is crippling is not the presence of an enemy but rather the universal belief . . . that the historic alternatives to capitalism have been proven unviable and impossible and that no other socioeconomic system is conceivable, let alone practically available. The Utopians not only offer to conceive of such alternate systems; Utopian form is itself a representational meditation on radical difference, radical otherness, and on the systemic nature of the social totality, to the point where one cannot imagine any fundamental change in our social existence which has not first thrown off Utopian visions like so many sparks from a comet. (*Archaeologies* xii)

Utopian thought functions as critical tool, indicator of better alternatives, and agent of change. Without social dreaming, there is little chance of understanding what political action might be taken, leaving hegemonic ideologies and social institutions uncriticized and uncontested.

The instances of utopian thinking in this dissertation occasionally approach radical utopianism, yet aspirations focused on smaller-scale, practicable social and political improvements are more prevalent. Such instances of social dreaming reflect Portuguese philosopher Boaventura de Souza Santos's argument that utopia is a gradual process grounded in the dreamer's social and historical context:

> A utopia é assim, o realismo desesperado de uma espera que se permite lutar pelo conteúdo da espera não em geral, mas no lugar e tempo em que se encontra. A esperança não reside num princípio geral que providencia um futuro geral. Reside na possibilidade de criar campos de experimentação social onde seja possível resistir localmente às evidências da inevitabilidade, promovendo com êxito alternativas que parecem utópicas em todos os tempos e lugares exceto naqueles em que ocorrem efetivamente. É este realismo utópico que preside as iniciativas dos grupos oprimidos que, num mundo onde parece ter desaparecido a alternativa, vão construindo um pouco, por toda parte, alternativas locais que tornam possíveis uma vida digna e decente. (34)

"Utopian realism" reacts to the widespread disillusionment of TINA by limiting the geographical and temporal reach of its objectives.[13] Still, this gradual construction of alternatives does not reflect an absence of hope but rather a redoubled focus on concrete utopianism that emphasizes small-scale reform.

[13] Political philosopher John Rawls brought this term into prominence in *The Law of Peoples* (1999), which explores the logical limits of justice under liberalism.

In *Firing Back*, Pierre Bourdieu outlines a similar process in the field of academia. The sociologist argues for an "autonomous collective intellectual" composed of scholars and artists to oppose the growing hegemony of neoliberal ideology fortified by the rise of reactionary think tanks (*Firing Back* 20). Bourdieu admits that the primary functions of such a group would be negative in that they must defend against discourses that are already widely accepted (*Firing Back* 20). Still, this collective can fulfill a positive function by seeking "realistic utopias" in the form of researching political action or supporting groups exploited under the status quo (*Firing Back* 21-2). Realistic utopianism thus partially accepts the limitations of an era defined by anti-utopianism while striving for incremental change that would ameliorate life for those most victimized by the prevailing social and political order.

Brazilian poet and critic Haroldo de Campos's theory of post-utopia[14] adopts a similar approach to social dreaming that has proven salient in national literature since the 1980s. Though rarely mentioned outside of Brazil,[15] Campos's influential 1984 essay "Poesia e modernidade: da morte da arte à constelação. O poema pós-utópico," identifies criteria for hopeful aspiration in the wake of two decades of military dictatorship.[16] For the critic and co-founder of the concrete poetry movement, post-utopia signifies a re-engagement with utopian thought after an extended

[14] Keith Booker is the scholar most associated with this term among American critics. In his study of post-World War II American culture, Booker argues that diminished belief in utopia produced a limited variant of yearning rooted largely in disillusionment and fear (1-9). Still, the critic's failure to sufficiently differentiate post-utopianism from "dystopianism" and anti-utopianism muddles his analysis.

[15] The only exception encountered in research for this dissertation comes in *The Utopian Impulse in Latin America*, edited by Kim Beauchesne and Alessandra Santos, whose regional focus and organization by scholars of Brazil and Latin America creates space for theorists rarely included in English-language publications.

[16] Developed since 1979, the most complete version of Campos's theory of post-utopia is found in 1997's *O arco-íris branco*. The citations in this dissertation are taken from this book.

period of disillusionment. Distancing himself from the single-minded focus on the future typical of his early, concretist work, Campos now argues for poetry directly engaged with everyday reality:

> …a poesia viável do presente é uma poesia de pós-vanguarda, não porque seja pós-moderna ou antimoderna, mas porque é pós-utópica. Ao projeto totalizador da vanguarda, que, no limite, só a utopia redentora pode sustentar, sucede a pluralização das poéticas possíveis. Ao *princípio-esperança*, voltado para o futuro, sucede o *princípio-realidade*, fundamento ancorado no presente. (268)

While still hopeful for future change on a large scale, post-utopianism prioritizes a critical response to pressing issues in the present.[17] Unlike more revolutionary forms of utopianism seeking a sociopolitical tabula rasa, this limited aspiration seeks incremental change through a close focus on contemporary reality.

Like utopia, dystopia seeks to inspire hopefulness through criticism of the present. Whereas utopian representation presents improved or neutral sociopolitical alternatives, however, dystopian narratives highlight or exaggerate society's flaws.[18] For Michael D. Gordin, Helen Tilley, and Gyan Prakash, "dystopia places us directly in a dark and depressing reality, conjuring up a terrifying future if we do not recognize and treat its symptoms in the here and now" (2). Though John Stuart Mill first used the term in 1868, Claeys traces the origins of

[17] In her recent dissertation on post-utopianism in recent American and Russian science fiction literature, Julia Gerhard identifies inconsistencies in the use of this term among critics from each nation before proposing that, "post-utopian texts . . . simultaneously contain both utopian *and* dystopian discourses" (28). Although such a dynamic is central to several of the works analyzed in this dissertation, post-utopian works outside of the science fiction genre challenge the idea of an essential divide between the two discourses based on the presence of dystopian aesthetics.

[18] Following Claeys, I prefer "dystopian thinking" and "dystopian thought" to the rarely used "dystopianism" (*Dystopia* 5).

dystopia to Apocalyptic narratives as old as 1000 B.C. (“The Origins” 109; *Dystopia* 5). The genre of dystopian literature achieved prominence in the twentieth century, as authors like H.G. Wells and, later, Yevgeny Zamyatin, Aldous Huxley, and George Orwell popularized the form through allegorical novels critiquing modernity, technology, fascism, and totalitarian communism (Claeys, “The Origins” 107-109).

In his exhaustive study of dystopian narratives, Claeys posits that the defining images of a dystopian aesthetic include corpses, derelict buildings, submerged monuments, decaying cities, or wastelands set against a background of cataclysm, war, lawlessness, disorder, and or suffering (*Dystopia* 3-4). Much criticism of the concept analyzes science fictional or fantastical texts that use these shocking tropes in an allegorical critique. Still, dystopian thinking likewise functions as a reaction to extant problems and representations illuminating social issues in a realist mode. Leomir Cardoso Hilário’s description of the concept as an “*aviso de incêndio,* o qual, como todo recurso de emergência, busca chamar a atenção para que o acontecimento perigoso seja controlado, e seus efeitos, embora já em curso, sejam inibidos,” concisely identifies the underlying objective that unifies dystopian thinking regardless of the genre or medium employed to evoke such a reaction (202). Jim Miller names this critical impulse “utopian pessimism,” a term that highlights the unusual process of stimulating hopeful thinking through a tight focus on the worst elements of a given society (337). Through this process, dystopia functions as a negative of utopian thought. Instead of inspiring social dreaming by presenting better alternatives, dystopian thinking reacts to nightmare visions that emphasize and amplify undesirable aspects of reality.

Some dystopian texts only vaguely reference the origins of the social ills on display or veil their critiques through layers of fantasy and allegory. On the other hand, some dystopias,

accentuate underlying causes. In his analysis of science fictional dystopias in the 1980s and 1990s, Sargent coins the term "critical dystopias" to characterize the works that explicitly identify the roots of the depicted problems ("The Three" 5-7). For Tom Moylan, critical dystopian thinking, "negotiates the necessary pessimism of the generic dystopia with an open, militant utopian stance . . . [and] self-reflexively refuses the anti-utopian temptation that lingers like a dormant virus in every dystopian account" (195). Whereas anti-utopia veers towards nihilism in its presumption that social dreaming is an inherently coercive process, critical dystopias assume that utopianism can ameliorate or reimagine specific, harmful aspects of reality. This implicit hopefulness clearly distinguishes dystopian thinking from anti-utopianism despite their occasional conflation in critical texts.

Among the Brazilian works analyzed in this dissertation, utopian and dystopian thinking often function in service of ideological critique. Like utopia, ideology is a term whose highly varied associations confound efficient synthesis. In his historical overview of the concept, Terry Eagleton lists sixteen competing definitions of the term (1-2). This group is roughly divided among understandings based on an epistemological understanding of ideology, rooted in the work of Hegel and Marx, that interpret the concept as a process of false cognition that distorts underlying, absolute truths and those derived from a sociological tradition focused on the social function of ideas within a given context (Eagleton 3). While the illustrations of ideology among the texts selected for this dissertation at times suggest readings invoking each tradition, my analytical focus centers the second category.

Given this priority, the definition that most closely matches my understanding of ideology is, "the process whereby social life is converted to a natural reality" (Eagleton 2). This interpretation draws heavily on Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus* and *doxa*. *Habitus*, as

summarized by Eagleton, consists of, "the inculcation in men and women of a set of durable dispositions which generate particular practices" (156).[19] This process establishes general limits of cognition and social action among a given group of individuals. *Doxa* represent beliefs deeply ingrained through the workings of *habitus*. Bourdieu defines *doxa* as, "relations of order which, because they structure inseparably both the real world and the thought world, are accepted as self evident" (*Distinction* 471). For an individual governed by a given society's *doxa*, the subjective and objective correspond so closely that, "no social arrangement different from the present could even be imagined" (Eagleton 157). This schema presupposes a relationship of dominance whereby a group yields sufficient political and discursive power to establish, disseminate, and enforce norms and beliefs throughout a society. Such a dynamic approximates Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which includes ideology alongside the political and economic mechanisms of maintaining power (in Eagleton 112-113).

Given this understanding of ideology, utopianism inspires critique by revealing the presence of *doxa* and offering alternative social visions.[20] In Bourdieu's parlance, utopian thought approximates the role of *heterodoxy*, ideas or practices that challenge the status quo and invoke *orthodoxy*, the explicit defense of *doxa* that brings their influence to light (in Eagleton 157). This dynamic differs considerably from Karl Mannheim's vision of a directly oppositional relationship between the titular terms of *Ideology and Utopia* (1936), the first study focused on

[19] Eagleton notes that the term "ideology" appears infrequently in Bourdieu's oeuvre, yet identifies these concepts closely with possible functions of ideology (156).

[20] Eagleton points out that, "in the critique of ideology, only those interventions will work which make sense to the mystified subject itself" (xiv). Further, the critic notes that such a critique "presumes that nobody is ever *wholly* mystified – that those subject to oppression experience *even now* hopes and desires which could only be realistically fulfilled by a transformation of their material conditions" (xiv).

these concepts' interaction (in Sargent, *Utopianism* 119-120). Other prominent theorists, however, adopt perspectives more in line with Bourdieu. As Kellner describes, "For Bloch, ideology is 'Janus-faced,' two-sided: it contains errors, mystifications and techniques of manipulation and domination, but it also contains a utopian residue or surplus that can be used for social critique and to advance progressive politics" (85). Bloch's utopian hermeneutic, then, strives to separate the wheat of hope from the chaff of oppressive or distorting ideology. In *Ideology and Utopia* (1986), Paul Ricoeur describes utopia as revealing the, "contingency of order," naturalized by ideology (300). Through critique, utopianism reveals beliefs or practices (both harmful and not) naturalized by a given ideology.

In his work on ideology and literature, Jameson describes the concept as "axiomatics of the imaginary," that is, "those conceptual conditions of possibility or narrative presuppositions which one must 'believe,' those empirical preconditions which must have been secured, in order for the subject to tell itself this particular day-dream" (*Political* 171; 168-169). Representation does not spring from ideology, but the *doxa* of a given society do influence the artist's hopes, desires, and interpretation of material reality that, in turn, inform the text. Still, Jameson mirrors Bloch while arguing that all cultural production necessarily contains traces of the utopian impulse alongside elements of distortion rooted in ideology (*Political* 271-290). This dynamic creates a point of connection with Jacques Rancière's writing on aesthetics and politics. For Rancière, all aesthetic representations are political in that they redistribute the sensible, that is, "the system of divisions and boundaries that define, among other things, what is visible and audible within a particular aesthetic-political regime" (1). Most often, any "representational regime" illustrates a vision of the world in line with the *doxa* of the society in which it is produced (39). Some works, however, amplify marginalized voices that are typically silenced. In

so doing, these works critique the hegemonic distribution of the sensible in a process that closely mirrors utopia's challenge to ideology.

Utopias in Concrete: Utopian Thinking and Urban Space

This section presents an overview of utopia's association with cities and introduces elements of spatial theory relevant to my analysis of the included texts. Kumar notes a long history of associating cities with divinity, reason, and rationality in the work of thinkers including Plato, Aristotle, More, Tommaso Campanella, and Francis Bacon (*Utopianism* 12-13). More conjures these concepts in Amaurot, the urban capital of More's Utopia, through description of architectural uniformity, spacious avenues, and verdant gardens. As Sargent describes, "Post-More utopias have often been characterized as focusing on the city. The historian and architectural critic Lewis Mumford (1895-1990) in particular argued that the city and the utopia were closely linked" (*Utopianism: A Brief* 20). While newer visions of idealized cities share the underlying principle of "systematically designed environments" with their predecessors, they also include space for privacy, leisure, spontaneity, and diversion (Kumar, *Utopianism* 16). The poles of individual liberty and urbanistic prescription often create considerable tension, as seen in the included depictions of São Paulo and, especially, Brasília.

Geographer Doreen Massey argues that cities embody an extreme range of experience. The city at once contains hints of a utopia to come and embodies the elements of society's "most dystopic fears" ("On Space" 158). On the one hand, cities are sites of ecological decay, socioeconomic division, and interpersonal disconnect.[21] On the other, the dynamism and

[21] Beatriz Jaguaribe offers a pragmatic explanation for the prevalence of exaggeratedly negative portraits of the metropolis: "Dystopian visions of the city are far easier to convey than ideal notions of what a city should be. Traffic congestion, poverty, social violence, inequality,

diversity of urban life remain a font of hopefulness (158). Metropolises are privileged sites of utopian and dystopian thought, yet their heterogeneity challenges critical interpretation. This variability informs Gisela Heffes's call for a utopian hermeneutic approach to urban space:

> …lo utópico puede encontrarse a nuestro alrededor, tanto en las claves de un mundo anterior, perdido, que puede anticipar el futuro, como en las formaciones estéticas que nos 'iluminan' sobre aquello que falta y todavía puede devenir o llegar a ser, aquellas inspiran esperanza en el público o en los lectores, y proveen del ímpetu necesario para un cambio colectivo e individual. Así también son las ciudades que nos ocupan: espacios que albergan deseos, y deseos que se proyectan en espacialidades nuevas. Geografías y políticas de mejoramiento o, inversamente, impugnadoras de un modelo malogrado; urbanidades ancladas al sueño de una materialización prometida. (40-41)

Approximating a Blochian reading of culture, Heffes calls on critics to find sparks of utopian aspiration and heed the dystopian warnings inscribed in the contemporary city. Careful interpretation of the city's best and worst elements can point the way towards positive change.

Harvey's *Spaces of Hope* (2000) connects such a hermeneutic to spatial and political practice, arguing that change requires a critical approach to urban space. Properly interpreted and channeled utopianism can counteract the inequality and apathy typical of neoliberal cities:

> We want to remake ourselves but cannot leap outside of the dialectic and pretend we are not limited by the institutions and built environments in which we live. . . . As we collectively produce our cities, so we collectively produce ourselves. Projects concerning what we want our cities to be are, therefore, projects concerning human possibilities, who

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pollution, and lack of green areas are some of the culprits routinely pointed out as being inimical to the creation of a desirable city" (229).

> we want, or, perhaps even more pertinently, who we do not want to become. . . . Any project to revitalize utopianism needs to consider how and with what consequences it has worked as both a constructive and destructive force for change in our historical geography. (159)

Utopian action in the contemporary city must balance original imagination with a dystopian reading of past failures. In his 2008 essay "The Right to the City," Harvey expands upon this argument by urging residents of urban centers to collectively claim their rights as citizens: "The right to the city is . . . far more than a right of individual access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city more after our heart's desire" (1).[22] Without critical engagement and collective action, cities remain divided by class antagonisms exacerbated by neoliberal, capitalist policy (Harvey, "The Right" 9). Despite major material barriers to utopian thought and action inscribed in most cities, Harvey retains faith that a critique grounded in utopian and dystopian thinking can reshape urban space alongside urban society.

In her recent book on twenty-first century art in the Brazilian Federal District, Sophia Beal proposes an expansion to this theory she denotes the "creative right to the city" (*The Art* 17). This right, comprised of a shared ability to make and enjoy art in public spaces and represent one's city publicly in literary, visual, or auditory forms, expands the distribution of the sensible in a given city (17). Through challenging existing understandings of geographical

[22] Harvey explicitly builds upon Henri Lefebvre's 1968 book *Le droit à la ville,* which argues that all who live in cities deserve a dignified life. To reimagine a more egalitarian city, politicians and the urban working class must work together to reform the material and symbolic city ("The Right" 154).

locales, artists produce new symbolic places,[23] that is, "a tangible locale . . . that communicates intangible emotions and values (the work of a symbol) that influence a group's collective identity" (*The Art* 18).[24] This process of resignification challenges established understandings of urban geography while hinting at a utopian future where marginalized residents of the contemporary city might participate equally in the process of urbanization.

Brazilian scholar Denise Falcão Pessoa highlights the necessity of radical utopianism in the field of urbanism (and that of ecology) in her study of São Paulo. For Pessoa, the heterogenous space of the contemporary city should inspire, rather than prevent unbridled aspiration:

> Pensar utopicamente uma cidade não é ter uma alucinação e propor algo estapafúrdio e inviável. Ao contrário. É buscar um caminho viável dentro do caos urbano, saindo à frente, prevendo soluções e mudando o curso da história . . . Pensar utopicamente hoje faz todo sentido. Mesmo que esta utopia indique um caminho de transformações muito mais radical do que o que é possível realizar, mesmo sabendo-se que o projeto possivelmente não será totalmente aproveitado. (141)

Without radical utopian aspiration, the status quo remains unchanged and the city's ecology remains on a trajectory of degradation. Failures or partial successes do not invalidate the process of social dreaming, but rather confirm its power to prevent the unchecked continuation of

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[23] I rely on Beal's synthesis of existing criticism in my discussions of place and space: "*place* generally refers to the occupation of a location, which involves lived experience, emotion, human interaction, and the senses. *Space* usually refers to an abstract, general, more objective conception of location" (*The Art* 22).

[24] This definition builds on the work of urban geographer Jérôme Monnet, who writes that "the symbolic dimension of space should not be taken lightly, since it is what gives internal coherency to the living space of each person" (in Beal, *The Art* 18).

ideology and practices harmful to the urban environment and the city's residents. While contemporary Brazilian cities retain close associations with alienation, pollution, and violent crime,[25] this reputation belies their ongoing capacity to inspire utopian thinking.[26]

These assorted views of utopianism in urban space rely on Henri Lefebvre's argument that space is the product of social relations (*The Production* 83). Lefebvre breaks with a monolithic view of space, proposing its composition by a dynamic of spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces (33-40). Spatial practice or "perceived space" consists of the material environment of a given society which reproduces extant social forms (*The Production* 38). Representations of space or "conceived" space consists of imagined or cognitive designs of a given city created by, "scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers" (*The Production* 38). Representational spaces are, "space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'" (*The Production* 39). This category exists in relation with the former two, yet often creates a sense of productive tension derived from the contrast between the city as experienced in its initial design and construction. In this way, representational spaces illuminate alternative experiences and generate new understandings of urban life.

[25] This pessimistic view of contemporary cities is integral to what Teresa Caldeira calls the "talk of crime," a generalized fear of violence that fuels the production of bunkerized residences, closed condominiums, and shopping malls patrolled by private security (*City of Walls* 4-19).

[26] In an interview with Cassiano Elek Machado, Milton Santos evocatively describes this pessimism about Brazilian urban life as a bulwark against utopianism: "A cidade é o único lugar em que se pode contemplar o mundo com a esperança de produzir um futuro. Mas se criou toda uma liturgia anticidade. A cidade, porém, acaba mostrando que não existe outro caminho senão o socialismo. Para evitar que as pessoas acreditem nisso, há todo um foguetório ideológico para dizer que a cidade é uma droga" (in Santos, *O país* 71).

The work of anthropologist Michel de Certeau further illuminates the relationship between prescription and adaptation in spatial practice. For Certeau, strategies are top-down plans for a space. A strategic place legitimizes the existing social and political order primarily through making citizens visible to those in power (xix). Strategies do not fully define a given location, however, as inhabitants use tactics to escape observation and explore alternative uses of space (xix).[27] Tactics function as the negative of strategy, defamiliarizing the experience of life in a city and suggesting patterns of movement in defiance of existing norms and laws. While not inherently oppositional to strategies, this impulse towards innovation creates opportunities to subvert the status quo and implement alternative urban forms.

The frequent metaphor of the city as palimpsest illuminates the temporal dimension of space. Massey's concept of space-time based on overlapping social interrelations incorporates diversity of scale (ranging from the personal to the global) alongside a constantly reshaped, heterogeneous sense of time she terms "contemporaneous plurality" (*For Space* 9). While the image of a palimpsest formed through writing, erasure, and re-writing on ancient parchment implies a succession of homogenous layers of space-time, there are no such clean divisions between historical eras in the contemporary city. Brazilian geographer Milton Santos argues that space is primary constituted by *técnicas*, social and economic systems and their associated divisions and instruments of labor (*A natureza* 12). The gradual, partial replacement of one *técnica* by its successor means that multiple systems mark the geography of a space simultaneously, creating points of *rugosidade* where institutions rooted in different historical

[27] Examples of tactics include creating shortcuts, using locales for unintended purposes, and breaking rules (xix).

eras coexist (*A natureza* 25).[28] *Rugosidades*, then, represent points where multiple layers of an urban palimpsest are simultaneously visible. As Bruno Carvalho describes, the existence of *rugosidades* in the city further complicates the process of reading urban space, as "the past, in cities as in a reused manuscript, can make itself present even when it appears to have been discarded" (1). Still, such rare points of juxtaposition stimulate critical thinking about the hegemonic *técnica* of a given space-time.[29]

A final relevant concept, Michel Foucault's heterotopia, directly links utopia with space. While the critic posits that utopia exists at a remove from reality, heterotopia exist in the present as "counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (24). Foucault lists asylums, prisons, cemeteries, theaters, cinemas, gardens, museums, libraries, colonies, brothels, and boats as exemplary heterotopias given their embodiment of systems of spatial and social organization alternative to dominant forms (26-29). Any of these real places estranges presupposed norms and stimulates critical thinking about the prevailing social order. For Amanda Dennis, literary representation of real space further expands the critical possibilities of heterotopia: "The space of literature, read as heterotopia, would refract the real, exposing the order that contours our living spaces; the existence of such hybrid spaces reveals that *what is* could be otherwise" (169). Artistic representation can therefore transform any space interpreted as pertaining to the real world into a heterotopia through juxtaposition, comparison,

[28] Néstor García Canclini describes a phenomenon similar to *rugosidades* that he calls "heterogenidad multitemporal," meaning that urban forms and sociocultural institutions rooted in different historical periods coexist in Latin American cities (24).

[29] James Holston agrees, arguing that "City surfaces tell time and stories. . . Yet, although obvious, their registry is never wholly legible, because each foray into the palimpsest of city surfaces reveals only traces of these relations" ("Spaces" 155).

or defamiliarization. The utopian or dystopian elements introduced or underscored in these depictions encourage further contemplation of the relationship between space, society, and utopian thought.

Overview of Brazil as Utopia and Dystopia

Criticism employing utopian studies as a primary theoretical framework in cultural, literary, or cinematic analysis of Brazil remains restricted.[30] Nonetheless, a few works proved influential on this dissertation. Patrícia I. Vieira's *States of Grace: Utopia in Brazilian Culture* (2018) and Lúcia Nagib's *A utopia no cinema brasileiro: matrizes, nostalgia, distopias* (2003) are the most applicable such texts. Each book includes detailed readings of utopian and dystopian thought in culture including literary and cinematic works.[31] Additionally, the collection *The Utopian Impulse in Latin America* (2011), edited by Kim Beauchesne and Alessandra Santos, contains several chapters partially or entirely centered on utopian thought in Brazil. Finally, Carolin Overhoff Ferreira's recent article, "Reflecting on Hard and Soft Coups: A Comparison of *Aquarius* by Kleber Mendonça Filho and *Land in Anguish* by Glauber Rocha" (2017), uses theories fundamental to utopian studies in analysis of both films. Beyond these works, a wide range of critics have characterized Brazil and its territory as utopian (and, more recently, dystopian). An overview of this corpus will provide valuable insight into the

[30] This is, presumably, mainly attributable to the field's recent consolidation and small size. Still, the Society for Utopian Studies (founded 1975) has hosted a yearly conference since 1976 and published *Utopian Studies*, a thrice yearly peer-reviewed periodical, since 1988.

[31] P. Vieira uses a framework firmly grounded in utopian studies to analyze the theological utopianism of Padre Antônio Vieira, utopian and dystopian representations of the Amazon region, the intersections between animal and human in the writing of Clarice Lispector, and portrayals of Brazil as a "utopia of leisure."

importance of these concepts in Brazilian cultural production and contextualize the work of the contemporary artists analyzed in this dissertation.

Beauchesne and Santos describe Brazil's connection with utopian aspiration as part of "an indisputable concentration of this [utopian] impulse in the history of Latin America, as has been shown by tracing the trajectories and ruptures of this concept from pre-Colombian worldviews to contemporary culture" (14-15). Brazil's ties to More's *Utopia* are symbolically potent in this regard, as Hytholoday's Portuguese origin suggests a linkage between the island kingdom of Utopia and Portugal's only colony in the recently discovered New World. In fact, Afonso Arinos de Melo Franco asserts in a work published in 1937 that Utopia represents the Brazilian archipelago of Fernando de Noronha and that More learned of the islands from the published letters of explorer Américo Vespucci (in Nagib 32). Whether accurate or not, this connection with *Utopia* reflects widespread and long-term belief in Brazil's potential for excellence.

In *Brazil Imagined*, Darlene Sadlier traces the legacy of representing Brazil as a paradisiacal *locus amoenus* to Pero Vaz de Caminha's letter to the Portuguese king Dom Manuel I (1500) (11). This exaggerated conception grounded in the size of the Brazilian territory and its bountiful *flora* has transformed into a cornerstone of local identity since this first instance of European contact. As Sérgio Buarque de Holanda demonstrates in his history *Visão do paraíso*, the Edenic undertones of Caminha's missive resonate strongly in colonial cultural artefacts and myths. For Marilena Chauí, exaggeratedly laudatory visions of the nation's destiny continue to inform the national identity in the twenty-first century. For this philosopher, diverse moments including Antônio Vieira's prophecies, the Romantic poetry movement, and late-nineteenth-

century positivism (tied to the exaggeratedly jingoistic philosophy of *ufanismo*)[32] all contributed to the consolidation of a mythology based on an idealized understanding of Brazil and its territory (58-76).[33] No work is more paradigmatic of this outlook than Stefan Zweig's *Brazil: A Land of the Future* (1941). Several years after first fleeing Nazism, Zweig traveled to Brazil twice before settling in Petrópolis, Rio de Janeiro. Inspired by Brazil's tropical fecundity and supposed racial harmony, this Austrian-born author conceived of the country as a blueprint for future societies worldwide.

The hopeful vision of *Brazil: A Land of the Future* continued to inform national mythology and cultural production over the following decades despite the author's tragic death by suicide in 1942. Brasília's construction remains the primary symbol of the national developmentalist politics founded on belief that Brazil could, at last, become a wealthy and modern nation. This mid-century optimism is particularly relevant for this dissertation as it represents a moment of idealistic utopianism just prior to the 1964 coup d'état that inaugurated twenty years of dictatorship. In his study of the 1950s and 1960s, sociologist Marcelo Ridenti coins the term revolutionary romanticism to describe a hopeful belief in Brazil's future that linked politics and art: "A utopia revolucionária romântica do período valorizava acima de tudo a vontade de transformação . . . O romantismo das esquerdas não era uma simples volta ao passado, mas também modernizador. Ele buscava no passado elementos para a construção da

[32] Gilvan C.C. de Araújo directly connects the legacy of Edenic representation to the philosophy of *ufanismo* that has informed Brazilian identity and politics since independence.

[33] While these interrelated visions of Brazil as naturally destined for greatness might appear to exemplify utopian thought, Chauí demonstrates that their legitimation of an unequal and violent status quo is starkly ideological: "o mito fundador opera de modo socialmente diferenciado: do lado dos dominantes, ele opera na produção da visão de seu direito natural ao poder e na legitimação desse pretenso" (86).

utopia do futuro" (8-9). This strain of utopianism, visible in the early films of Cinema Novo, combines a nationalist approach to culture with an anti-capitalist socioeconomic critique. Giovanni Ricciardi notes a similar phenomenon in the field of literature, identifying a sense of lightness and optimism connecting the work of authors including Jorge Amado, Dalton Trevisan, and José J. Veiga during this time (19-42). The dawn of the military dictatorship, however, dented belief in the power of hopeful thinking and later pushed many artists towards dystopian aesthetics.

While less prevalent than the myth of Edenic Brazil, Sadlier identifies a parallel lineage of representing Brazil as a *locus terribilis*. These depictions balancing shocking subject matter and a critical impulse originated with sixteenth-century images of cannibalism produced by Europeans like Johann Theodor de Bry, Hans Staden, and André Thevet (47-57). The critic charts a similar, condemnatory approach to Brazil and its people in the posterior poetry of Gregório de Matos and paintings of Carlos Julião (88-91, 97-100). Julião's detailed portraits of slaves represent an early example of critique focused on the plight of black Brazilians. For Sadlier, the artist's work stands out from other colonial representations of slavery due to the expressions of unhappiness and discomfort visible on the faces of the men and women held in bondage (97-99). As abolitionism gained prominence in the nineteenth century, artists associated with this movement prefigured elements of dystopian representation to reveal the ongoing abuses tied to slavery in Brazil. Castro Alves's "O navio negreiro" (1870), for example, incorporates violent imagery to conjure the despair and torture experienced by enslaved Africans en route to the New World.[34] As Machado de Assis's "Pai contra mai" (1907) illustrates, slavery persevered

[34] Other abolitionist texts likewise incorporated violent imagery, emotional appeals based on family separation, or a combination of both. Authors associated with this movement include

as an important literary theme in the years following abolition, while the same institution (and racial prejudice and discrimination more generally) remain foundational subjects for contemporary dystopian works across genres and media.[35] Overtly critical texts tackling any number of social issues became more common during the First Brazilian Republic, yet the only well-known work from this time drawing directly from the tradition of early Anglo-American dystopias is Monteiro Lobato's pro-eugenics science fictional novel *O presidente negro ou a choque das raças* (1926).[36] In fact, prominent literary or cinematic works fitting even a broad definition of dystopian remain rare until the military dictatorship.[37]

Though the initial years of this regime did not represent an immediate plunge into repression, the December 1968 passage of the fifth Institutional Act (AI-5) initiated the *anos de chumbo* period defined by censorship, the loss of *habeus corpus*, and frequent torture of political

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Maria Firmina dos Reis, Francisco Coelho Duarte Badaró, José de Alencar, Luiz Gama, José do Patrocínio, and Joaquim Nabuco.

[35] See Marcus Wood's *Black Butterfly: Slavery in the Brazilian Literary Imagination* (2019) for further analysis of slavery in texts by Castro Alves, Machado de Assis, and Euclídes da Cunha.

[36] The novel critiques American imperialism in 1920s Brazil while also imagining racial conflict in the U.S. spurred by the 2228 presidential election in which the main candidates are a white man, a white woman, and a black man. Though the black candidate wins, he dies before assuming office. Later, a devious, fantastical hair-straightening technology sterilizes the entire African American population. Barack Obama's election renewed interest in the novel, which received a new edition in 2008.

[37] A few, canonical examples from this period that incorporate dystopian logic or imagery into otherwise realist novels include Lima Barreto's *O triste fim de Policarpo Quaresma* (1915) and Rachel de Queiroz's *O quinze* (1930). Texts from the Modernist literary movement including Mário de Andrade's *Macunaíma* (1928) and Oswald de Andrade's essay "Manifesto antropófago" famously invoke the dystopian image of cannibalism but reframe the act as a constructive process.

prisoners.[38] Dystopian representation became prominent in Brazil for the first time, with Ricciardi defining repression as the central theme of national literature during the 1970s (89). M. Elizabeth Ginway agrees, noting that the three dominant literary trends during the worst years of the dictatorship consisted of "experimental political novels, dystopian fiction, and documentary or testimonial novels, all of which denounce the military regime" ("Literature" 248). By dystopian fiction, Ginway means allegorical, science fictional texts criticizing the dictatorship's stance on issues including technology, the regimentation of sexuality, and ecological degradation (*Brazilian Science* 33). Still, each of these three genres share a critical dystopian impulse. The increasing prevalence of urban settings among these works reflects the nation's shifting demographics and foregrounds the divisions, injustice, and inequalities typical of Brazil's cities during the dictatorship period (Ginway, *Brazilian Science* 14-15).

Brazilian cinema during the military period rarely embraced the aesthetics of science fiction.[39] Still, many films from the period encourage dystopian thinking through critical portraits of society under the military regime. The directors associated with Cinema Novo remained prominent during the early years of the dictatorship, though Randal Johnson and Robert Stam describe how the romantic optimism typical of their early work gave way to downbeat, critical narratives, and, later, aesthetically exuberant works structured to evade censorship (30-40). During the same period, the directors of the Cinema Marginal movement crafted low-budget, aesthetically experimental works. For Antônio Márcio da Silva and Mariana Cunha, the films of

[38] Despite this violence, Christopher Dunn describes the same years as a time of great official optimism driven by the economic growth known as the "Brazilian Miracle." The regime hired public relations experts to weaponize *ufanismo* and further consolidate the national myth (23).

[39] Exceptions include Walter Lima Jr.'s *Brasil ano 2000* (1969), José de Anchieta's *Parada 88* (1978), and Roberto Pires's *Abrigo nuclear* (1981).

this movement projected the nation's urban centers as hotbeds of depravity (9-10). Later, gritty, urban dramas like Héctor Babenco's *Pixote: a lei do mais fraco* (1980) and João Batista de Andrade's *O homem que virou suco* (1981) highlighted the violence and exploitation endemic to Brazil's largest metropolises (Sadlier 258-269).

The return to democracy represented cause for hope as well as for continued frustration. While Christopher Dunn mentions Jorge Mautner's 1980 work of non-fiction *Panfletos da nova era* as emblematic of renewed utopianism during this process, such optimistic views coexist with the pessimism of writers like Luiz Carlos Maciel, who saw the 1980s as a global "autumn of alienation" (202-203). The unbridled, nationalist utopianism evinced by Mautner is particularly rare given the rise of what Maria Paula Nascimento Araújo calls "fragmented utopias," that is, smaller, identity-based social movements striving for greater rights (in Dunn 33). This complex matrix of revolutionary utopianism, cautious optimism, and resigned pessimism foreshadows the state of utopia visible in the works analyzed in this dissertation

Critical literature centered on Brazil's cities has remained prevalent throughout the following decades, beginning with the work of a generation of writers Ricciardi identifies as largely disconnected from any overarching political or aesthetic project (321-322).[40] Although no critic to date has analyzed the period's production through the lens of utopian studies, Tânia Pellegrini identifies dystopian, urban themes as prominent in recent production across styles and genres:[41]

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[40] In her analysis of the post-modern short story collection *Geração 90: Manuscritos de computador* (2001), edited by Nelson de Oliveira, Paloma Vidal names the included writers representatives of a "geração pós-utópica," due to common skepticism about concepts like historical progress and utopia (169).

[41] In *Cena do crime*, Schøllhammer names violence as a defining theme of the several subcategories of realism he identifies in the literature of the late twentieth and early twenty-first

> As cidades tentaculares, com a deterioração de suas extremidades periféricas, gerando legiões de excluídos que rapidamente se tornam marginais, é tema ideal para o hiper-realismo pós-moderno, vazado numa brutalidade inescapável e numa ausência de afeto quase obscena. Violência e degradação insidiosas, que se misturam a uma presença maciça da cultura popular urbana, pervadindo as vidas de personagens sem presente e sem futuro. (73)

This dire assessment reflects a contemporaneous rise in urban violence, continued economic inequality, and frequent disillusionment with the status quo under neoliberalism.[42] While perhaps overly pessimistic, Pellegrini's critique underlines the baseline of dystopian representation common to an otherwise stylistically and thematically heterogenous group of texts.

Contemporary Brazilian poetry is notable for its diversity, yet utopia remains a recurrent theme due largely to the influence of Campos's theory of post-utopianism. Although critics including Renato Resende, Solange Fiuza Cardoso Yokozawa, and Alexandre Bonafim concur that post-utopianism notably influenced subsequent poetic production, the merits of such limited

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century (162-173). The critic identifies Rubém Fonseca as a touchstone for this vein of production, calling his story "A arte de andar nas ruas do Rio de Janeiro" (1992), "o conto emblemático de uma nova literatura da cidade," due to its evocation of modern *flâneurie* in a degraded, wasteful and exclusionary city (*Literatura brasileira* 40). Pellegrini adopts a similar view of the literary violence prominent at the turn of the century, describing how the invocation of urban violence closely parallels the function of critical dystopian representation, "[a violência] revela a concretude do horror, podendo servir, assim à causa de uma possível transformação . . . pode-se pensar que talvez seja essa a única maneira de olhar de frente tal realidade: aceitando o trauma, representá-lo por meio de choques" (202-203).

[42] Consult Harvey's *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (2007) for information about the transition to neoliberalism and its global impact. See Alfredo Saad-Filho and Lecio Morais's *Brazil: Neoliberalism versus Democracy* (2018) for more about neoliberal policy in Brazil.

aspiration remain the subject of debate (45, 62).[43] At one extreme, Iumna Simon associates the restricted ambition of post-utopian poetry with the inert, repetitive poetic forms she defines as *retradicionalização* (in Yokozawa and Bonafim 12). For her part, however, Diana Junckes Bueno Martha argues that post-utopia is a productive reframing of utopianism: "a pós-utopia . . . não tem nada do ceticismo de um olhar para o presente, de desespero ou desilusão, não é refém da crise, mas responde a ela, criticamente" (168). These divergent interpretations underscore the challenge of negotiating hopeful aspiration after two decades of repressive dictatorship and the subsequent turn to neoliberal policy by Brazil's early, democratically elected leaders.

The heterogenous themes and forms of poetry since the late twentieth century allow for widely varied manifestations of utopianism. Flora Süssekind describes a shift towards abstract representation extending from the late 1990s, with poets foregrounding liminary spaces, transitions, and subjectivity (66-70). Fábio Weintraub, however, notes a simultaneous countercurrent of urban poetry replete with spatiotemporally concrete references and criticism of issues like violence, urban mobility, and gentrification (19-33). Utopian thought is likewise a recurrent theme in alternative forms of poetry including the works performed in *saraus* throughout Brazil since the 1990s. This collection of gatherings, typically in working-class and peripherical urban neighborhoods, has provided a stage for marginalized artists historically excluded from literary publication. Like the work of the countercultural *poesia marginal* movement originated in the 1970s, these performed poems provide a counterpoint to contemporaneous production released by established publishers.[44]

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[43] Robson Coelho Tinoco agrees, calling 1984 "um marco divisório entre o período das gerações 68 e 70, ainda revolucionário, e o período propriamente de final de século" (62).

[44] The success of peripherical *saraus* has led to the publication of some primarily performative artists in anthologies and, in a few cases, individual collections.

Literature has continued apace since redemocratization, but Brazilian cinematic production nearly ceased entirely after the 1990 disbandment of Embrafilme. As Tatiana Signorelli Heise describes, President Fernando Collor's decision to dissolve this state-funded company responsible for most national film financing led to the release of a mere twenty-nine features between 1990 and 1994 (56-57). Although later laws successfully incentivized public and private investment in national cinema, Nagib notes that the optimism visible in the early films of the *retomada* (the return to production) was short-lived (17). Still, utopian and dystopian thought both resonate in the work of this period despite what Daniel Caetano et al. identify as a lack of a unifying political project among *retomada* filmmakers (35).

Two groups of films analyzed in Nagib's *A utopia no cinema brasileiro* are particularly relevant to this study: films whose utopianism draws upon the revolutionary romanticism of early Cinema Novo and urban dystopias highlighting social conflict. The critic orients her criticism of the first group around the legacy of director Glauber Rocha and his codification of the ocean as a signifier of hopefulness in *Deus e o diabo na terra do sol* (1963). Expanding on Ismail Xavier's critique of this film (described further in Chapter One of this dissertation), Nagib defines belief in the possibility of a unifying, transformational state of grace as a common element of Cinema Novo's first phase (25-26). The same ocean, however, comes to represent sociopolitical regression in Rocha's *Terra em transe* (1967) as the director considers the impact of the 1964 coup d'état. Using these contrasting depictions of the sea as an interpretive matrix, Nagib identifies a tentative return to utopianism during the *retomada*[45] that rapidly diminishes as disillusionment with neoliberalism grows:

[45] Examples of this phenomenon include *Corisco e Dadá* (Rosemberg Cariry, 1996), *Baile perfumado* (Lírio Ferreira and Paulo Caldas, 1997), *Crede-mi* (Bia Lessa and Dany Roland, 1996), and *Abril despedaçado* (Walter Salles, 2001). A clear exception from this is *Terra*

> Movido por uma euforia que refletia o retorno da crença no Brasil como um país viável, o gesto utópico, perdido no passado do *cinema novo*, retornou com novo ímpeto, particularmente notável nos primeiros anos da reforma neoliberal do governo Fernando Henrique Cardoso. No entanto, essa nova utopia jamais encontrou expressão plena, sujeita como estava ao realismo que constata a permanência dos vícios que marcaram a história do país desde a origem. (17)

This renewed impulse towards radical utopianism largely disappeared by the dawn of the twenty-first century. In its place, Nagib identifies a growing tendency towards dystopias and narratives grounded in fatalism.[46]

The works Nagib considers dystopian center on Brazil's largest cities, including the São Paulo of Beto Brant's *O invasor* (2001).[47] This film illustrates dwindling hopefulness and the rise of urban violence through the trajectory of the hitman Anísio (Paulo Miklos). While the corrupt capitalists who hire the assassin meet their downfall, the film is ultimately anti-utopian since Anísio fills their social roles and thus precludes any possibility of deeper reform (164-165). Cléber Eduardo expounds on the blurring between dystopia and anti-utopia in the films of the *retomada*, describing an implicit consensus that the only solution to Brazil's problems is leaving

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estrangeira (1995) by Walter Salles and Kátia Lund, which is an anti-utopian tale of emigration and alienation portraying the Collor years as the end of Brazil's long history of utopian aspiration (26-27).

[46] The critic does identify a few post-utopian works from the later years of the *retomada* that depict characters' struggles to remain hopeful and socially engaged without tilting into nihilism like Walter Salles's *Central do Brasil* (1998) and Salles and Daniela Thomas's *O primeiro dia* (2000).

[47] Nagib also traces Rio de Janeiro's descent from paradise to hell in Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund's *Cidade de Deus* (2003), describing how the rise of urban violence immerses the peaceful, semi-rural Cidade de Deus *favela* into the cyclical violence of the city at large (152).

the country behind. Though this perspective is not limited to urban films, the critic notes an absence of collective political action and widespread disbelief in the possibility of future improvement ("Fugindo" 51-52).[48]

The early twenty-first century was a time of comparative stability for filmmakers, who frequently found funding[49] through a combination of the Rouanet and Audiovisual laws instituted after the disbandment of Embrafilme, the private producer Globo Filmes (founded in 1998), and the public Fundo Setorial do Audiovisual.[50] As Eduardo describes, this period has seen the consolidation of auteurist filmmaking in regions away from the traditional Rio de Janeiro-São Paulo axis, with collaborators formally or informally grouped into collectives earning financing for regionally-focused work ("Continuidade" 567).[51] With symbolic capital fortified by academic and journalistic criticism and distribution available on public television or, more recently, online streaming services such as Netflix or Amazon, authorial films retain importance even without high box office intakes.[52]

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[48] Eduardo names *O invasor* and *Terra estrangeira* as examples alongside *Carlota Joaquina, princesa do Brasil* (Carla Camurati, 1995), *Abril despedaçado* (Walter Salles, 2001), *Bicho de sete cabeças* (Laís Bodansky, 2000), and *O homem que copiava* (Jorge Furtado, 2003).

[49] For detailed information on film financing in Brazil since the *retomada*, consult Marcelo Ikeda's *Cinema brasileira a partir da retomada: aspectos econômicos e políticos* (2015).

[50] The generation who came of age during the late 2000s is sometimes referred to as "Novíssimo Cinema Brasileiro," though the term implies a non-existent level of philosophical and thematic unity.

[51] A few prominent examples include Filmes de Plástico from Minas Gerais, Alumbramento from Ceará, and CEICINE from the Federal District.

[52] In her analysis of the relative success of industrial, mass-marketed national cinema during the same time, Sheila Schvartzman notes the importance of Globo Filmes and Ancine's (Agência Nacional do Cinema) subsidizing of multiplex cinemas (522-523). The critic notes the outsized box office return of lighthearted comedies during the early twenty-first century yet observes a turn away from the genre around 2016 due to political turmoil and economic strife (559).

Despite its recency, critics have convincingly identified several stylistic and thematic trends in post-*retomada* Brazilian cinema.[53] Most relevant to this study is what Eduardo describes as a sense of persistent unease frequently communicated through the incorporation of genre aesthetics ("Continuidade" 594). Long an afterthought, Brazilian science fiction and horror have become increasingly popular, often in hybrid forms interwoven with realist, dramatic elements.[54] As seen in several works analyzed in this dissertation, the inclusion of tropes and aesthetics associated with each genre often amplify dystopian social and political critiques.[55] This stylistic experimentation and embrace of indeterminacy represents a new frontier in Brazilian filmmakers' continued engagement with utopianism.

[53] The diversity of post-*retomada* filmmakers leaves much to be desired, though the situation has recently begun to improve. Female directors have made significant strides, helming between 20 and 25 percent of domestic features by the late 2000s according to Luciana Corrêa de Araújo (155). Films focusing on LGBTQ issues, many directed by queer artists, have grown increasingly common over the last few years, with Stefan Soloman declaring the "near-mainstreaming of same-sex desire on screen." Afro-Brazilian directors have, unfortunately, been less successful, only directing 2.1% of 2016 films (Soloman).

[54] Consult Laura Loguercio Cánepa's "Medo de que?: uma história do horror nos filmes brasileiros" and Alfredo Suppia's *Atmosfera rarefeita: A ficção científica no cinema brasileiro* (2013) for detailed information on the history of each genre in Brazil.

[55] In his monograph on twenty-first century documentary filmmaking, Gustavo Procópio Furtado notes that non-fictional films became increasingly prominent on national screens during this time (2-3). The critic's belief that "the documentary of the period also has become an increasingly inclusive and diverse field that serves as both a platform to reflect on and a tool to intervene in situations marked by asymmetrical distributions of power and pending social justice," hints at the importance of utopianism among recent nonfictional production (3).

Chapter Breakdown

This dissertation incorporates a broad range of utopian studies and spatial studies theory while considering the place of utopian thought in contemporary Brazilian cities. In four chapters organized into two sections, I analyze literary and cinematic representations of Brazilian cities since 1980 to survey the state of utopianism during this period. At the same time, I consider the artistic techniques invoked to convey associated concepts including post-utopianism, critical dystopia, anti-utopia, and ideological critique. Throughout, I call attention to instances of interaction between hope, disillusionment, and urban space. Each section begins with an introduction that presents historical and social context relevant to literary and cinematic depictions of the metropolis analyzed in the included chapters.

The first section, "Embers of Utopianism in Brasília," begins with an introduction that synthesizes relevant aspects of Brasília's extensive legacy of utopian thought. In this subsection, I identify three strains of aspiration that contributed to the city's realization and continue to resonate despite the socioeconomic divisions that characterize contemporary life in the Federal District. Chapter One, "Utopia Lost: Reclaiming Hopefulness in Brasília's Literature," outlines the prevalence of post-utopianism among the included texts while juxtaposing this cautious hopefulness with one highly pessimistic and one exuberantly optimistic work. In this chapter, I consider prose works by Clarice Lispector, João Almino, Milton Hatoum, and Darcy Ribeiro alongside poetry by Nicolas Behr. The subsequent chapter, "Filming a Failed Utopia: Division, Disillusionment, and New Hope in Brasília's Cinema," highlights works that use estrangement and ambiguity to express critiques of the contemporary capital. The selected films offer a wide array of responses to a shared foundation of disillusionment. Resignation and ambivalence define many films, yet other works evince radical utopian views that either ratify the capital's initial

aspirations or call for the destruction of the Plano Piloto. The filmmakers featured in this chapter are Glauber Rocha, Ana Vaz, Daniela Thomas and Felipe Hirsh, and Adirley Queirós.

The second section, "São Paulo, *Sociedade Alienada*: Resignation and Aspiration in Brazil's Largest City," begins with an introduction that centers issues of local and regional identity, myth, and ideology related to the city's rapid rise from regional capital to cosmopolitan megacity. The push for modernization, profit, and progress created enormous wealth and considerable opportunities for the migrants who flocked to São Paulo, yet the city's longtime liberal, capitalist ethos also fortifies socioeconomic inequality, catalyzes ecological degradation, and creates a shared sense of amnesia and social alienation. Ideological critique is a central theme among the works analyzed in Chapter Three, "Seeking Salvation in Literary São Paulo." Dystopian thinking likewise stands out among the included texts, both in the form of allegorical works influenced by science fiction and realist depictions of the megalopolis's segregated and underserved periphery. The included authors, Ignácio de Loyola Brandão, Ferréz, Márcia Tiburi, Luiz Ruffato, and Nelson de Oliveira, employ differing techniques to defamiliarize the city's *doxa* yet consistently acknowledge the unlikelihood of structural change in the near future. The fourth and final chapter, "Kaleidoscopic Hope in Cinematic São Paulo," analyzes similarly dour visions of the city alongside comparatively optimistic, post-utopian works. The included filmmakers are Chico Botelho, Tata Amaral, Heitor Dhalia, Philippe Barcinski, Jeferson De, Sérgio Bianchi, and Juliana Rojas and Marco Dutra. Despite occasional indications of confidence in achieving incremental improvements, none of the included works allude to a radical utopian horizon. Instead, the selected filmmakers highlight the downsides of São Paulo's pursuit of progress to encourage dystopian thinking about issues including labor, crime, and alienation.

SECTION ONE

Embers of Utopianism in Brasília

SECTION INTRODUCTION

Brasília's Foundational Aspirations: Political, Mystical, and High Modernist Utopianism

Brasília is the global city most closely associated with the concept of utopia. Unfortunately for the over four million residents of the Federal District, this connection derives primarily from the fervor surrounding the city's construction rather than an exceptionally paradisiacal reality. While the name Brasília conjured images of utopia by the city's inauguration in 1960, the new capital did not represent a singular desire. Instead, the objective of a centralized seat of government recurred for roughly two centuries and attracted contributions from political, economic, social, religious, and urbanistic leaders whose ambitions for the imagined city diverged significantly. Brasília at last came to fruition following the election of Juscelino Kubitschek (JK) to Brazil's presidency in 1955. For JK and his allies, Brasília was a perfect symbol of his national developmentalist platform promising "50 years of progress in 5." This desire to consolidate political and economic modernity, however, coexisted with diverse aspirations including utopian mysticism tied to the writings of the Italian clergyman Dom Bosco and the egalitarian project of high modernist urban planning. As reflected in the works of literature and cinema analyzed in this section, these various forms of utopian thought continue to resonate in the contemporary capital despite their respective failures to radically transform Brazilian society.

Early visions of a centralized capital often prioritized the utopian political and economic implications of such a city.[56] Under colonialism, the benefits of a new seat of government included a demographic shift away from the coasts and increased resource extraction in the underexplored interior. Economic development and increasing inland population remained important after Brazil's independence, as did further integrating national identity. The Republican Constitution of 1891 proposed a central capital in Goiás, while the Cruls Mission led by Belgian astronomer and geographer Luiz Cruls identified the future capital's eventual location in 1892 (Sadlier 195-196). Still, the high cost and logistical challenges of occupying the Planalto Central delayed Brasília's construction. The population of the Center-West rose haltingly following Getúlio Vargas's "Marcha para o oeste" initiative and the construction of Goiânia in the 1930s, yet the area now delineated as the Federal District consisted of ranchland and a few, small permanent settlements. As such, the long-standing aspiration to push Brazilians inland and spark an integrated, postcolonial historical era remained unfulfilled in the 1950s.

The idea of a new capital held great symbolic weight as a monument to concepts like progress and modernity. Still, as Darlene Sadlier describes, Brasília also drew from the legacy of early utopian visions of Brazilian nature: "The utopian city in the wilderness also reflected the Edenic motif that had been associated with the newly discovered Brazil" (197). The new capital would serve as a manmade counterpart to this natural bounty, revealing the worthiness of Brazilian leaders to oversee the occupation of this fruitful territory. Though the *cerrado* (tropical

[56] Francisco Leitão and Sylvia Ficher list the following thinkers as also having referenced the possibility of a centralized capital: Italian cartographer Francisco Tossi Colombina in 1750, the Marquês de Pombal in 1761, the separatist leaders known as the Inconfidentes Mineiros in 1798, journalist and diplomat Hipólito José da Costa in 1810, the Portuguese Emporer Pedro I in 1821, congressman José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva in 1822, and the historian and viscount Francisco Adolpho de Varnhagen in 1877 (99).

savannah) of the Planalto Central is far from the lush greenery traditionally associated with Eden, the region's isolation provided a fresh opportunity for twentieth-century Brazilians to expand their footprint in the massive national territory. In her analysis of newsreels produced during the city's construction, Ana Lúcia de Abreu Gomes echoes this sentiment. For the critic, Brasília exists in harmony with the surrounding savannah while redeeming the previously untamable wilderness (53). Depending on one's perspective, Brasília either affirms the paradisiacal nature of the surrounding geography or promises a utopian horizon where Brazil can at last fulfill its destiny as the inheritor of privileged geography and ecology.

For Brazil's political utopianists, Brasília heralded a new historical moment defined by geographical and economic integration. This ambition for a utopian tabula rasa, reflected in the capital's high modernist urbanism, intended to liberate the nation from urban and social forms rooted in colonialism. Filipe Manzoni eloquently describes the process of collective amnesia portended by Brasília's construction: "O mito do novo mundo faz da pedra fundamental de Brasília . . . a base de uma nova sociedade e, ao mesmo tempo, uma espécie de *kolossós* da antiga, isto é, uma pedra tumular que encerraria a imagem do Brasil pré-moderno como quem cumpre um rito funerário" (91).[57] Brazilian history before Brasília would be confined to a forgotten past while the nation entered a period defined by modernity and wealth. Unfortunately, the new capital retained institutions and practices that reproduced the widespread inequality and authoritarianism typical of Brazil's past. The continued reaffirmation that historical oppression had been overcome and should be forgotten, then, became a harmful *doxa* that obscured and implicitly justified the continued marginalization of the Federal District's poor.

[57] Manzoni cites the work of Jean-Pierre Vernant, who describes a *kolossós* as a marker of Ancient Greek funereal rights meant to prevent the deceased spirit from returning to the realm of the living (91).

In addition to outsized hopes for political reform, Brasília became a symbol for a lasting strain of mystical utopianism. The Planalto Central's links to mysticism originate in a dream recorded by the Italian clergyman and writer Giovanni Bosco (known as Dom Bosco in Brazil). The priest, who never visited South America, envisioned a heavenly city in Brasília's approximate location nearly seventy-five years before the new capital's inauguration.[58] Brasília's founders integrated this prophetic dream into their propaganda about the city and Dom Bosco became the new capital's patron saint.[59] Mysticism continues to resonate throughout the Planalto Central in the beliefs of various New Age groups, mediums, and ufologists who maintain hope that the area is endowed with spiritual power or destined to serve as the site of mankind's eventual salvation.[60] While religious mysticism parallels utopian thought in imagining a hopeful future, blind belief in Brasília's predestined (if delayed) transformation into an earthly paradise undermines the creation of utopian solutions for specific, existent social problems.

[58] James Holston quotes a portion of the dream's English translation: "I saw the bowels of the mountains and the depths of the plains. I had before my eyes the incomparable riches . . . Between the fifteenth and the twentieth degrees of latitude, there was a long and wide stretch of land which arose at a point where a lake was forming. . . . there will appear in this place the Promised Land, flowing with milk and honey. It will be of inconceivable richness" (*The Modernist* 34).

[59] The saint's name adorns the Ermida Dom Bosco on the shores of Lake Paranoá, the Santuário Dom Bosco, known for its dazzling blue interior light, and any number of local businesses.

[60] As chronicled by journalist Raphael Ferreira, these groups include the Vale do Amanhecer community of mediums located in Planatina, a group practicing the syncretic religion Santo Daime, and wiccans. Another mystical figure, the medium João de Deus, gained international renown for his work in the nearby city of Abadiânia, Goiás. As Natália Cancian and Pedro Ladeira detail, however, the medium was recently convicted of sexual abuses spanning decades.

High modernist urbanism, the third major vein of Brasília's foundational mélange of aspiration, promised egalitarianism in the new capital.[61] Although of their time in design and method, Brasília's plans connect with a centuries-old pattern of attempting to shape society through urban design in the Americas. In *The Lettered City*, Ángel Rama directly connects the ordered, rational design of Brasília with the earliest reform efforts of the Spanish colonizers:

> From the remodeling of Tenochtitlán after its destruction by Hernán Cortés in 1521, to the 1960 inauguration of that most fabulous dream city of the Americas, Lúcio Costa's and Oscar Niemeyer's Brasília, Latin American cities have ever been creations of the human mind. The ideal of the city as the embodiment of social order corresponded to a moment in the development of Western civilization as a whole, but only the lands of the new continent afforded a propitious place for the dream of the 'ordered city' to become reality. (1)

Educated Latin Americans guided efforts at urban renewal for centuries, hoping to erase undesirable social structures through reason. For Brazil, a nation considered retrograde by leaders like JK, constructing a new capital would wipe the slate clean of problems associated with Rio de Janeiro. Brasília would remake the nation in its rationally ordered image, relegating the former capital's rampant social inequality, corruption, and decaying infrastructure to history.

High modernism at once negated historical flaws and encouraged new, more equitable social forms through urban design. Pioneered by the French-Swiss architect known as Le Corbusier, this movement centered on the *ville radieuse*, a utopian city described in the manifestos of the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne as a "a city of salvation . . . a

[61] I use James C. Scott's term "high modernism" to differentiate from modernisms in other fields, and from architectural and modernist urbanisms less dependent on the role of the urban planner.

solution to the urban and social crises attributed to the unbridled domination of private interests in the public realm of the city, in the accumulation of wealth, and in the development of industry" (in Holston, *The Modernist* 41). In this system, the state gives the planner license to influence society by negating the excesses of capitalism and combatting inequality through design. Despite the divergent politics of JK, urban planner Lúcio Costa, and lead architect (and communist) Oscar Niemeyer, all three parties shared belief in the state's fundamental role in shaping the urban fabric and, consequently, society.[62] JK hoped to institute just this sort of centralized official power in Brasília, where the public company NOVACAP (Companhia Urbanizadora da Nova Capital), owned all of the Federal District's land. Additionally, the president's belief in developmentalism led him to valorize innovation, making Niemeyer's cutting-edge aesthetics and use of technology a logical method to conjure a strong sense of progress and futurism in Brasília.[63] Still, conflict between this socialist-inspired design and the economic aims of JK and NOVACAP would rapidly derail the utopian goals of the capital's planners.

A major objective of Costa's design was, as James C. Scott describes, creating a capital without poverty: "Costa and Niemeyer were not only banishing the street and the square from their utopian city. They believed that they were also banishing crowded slums, with their darkness, disease, crime, pollution, traffic jams and noise, and lack of public services" (125). Costa's plan broke with past forms of urban sociality in Brazil by including housing free of class

[62] JK hosted a competition to design Brasília in 1956 and received twenty-six entries. Costa's simple sketches of a bird-shaped city best captured the symbolism of a city of hope and was thus declared the winner (Holston, *The Modernist* 60-74).

[63] As mayor of Belo Horizonte, JK had already chosen Niemeyer's striking curved lines forged in reinforced concrete for several municipal buildings, most famously the UNESCO-preserved Pampulha complex.

discrimination, prioritizing automobile traffic, and excluding street corners and plazas. The intention of these combined elements was imposing defamiliarization to subvert ingrained practices, ironically making this egalitarian project a "dictatorship of the planner" (Scott 113). The high modernists hoped that the capital's unique aspects would shock its residents, leading to a shared embrace of the new, superior forms of social organization they designed (*The Modernist* 92). Instead, early inhabitants rebelled against the latent authoritarianism of the capital's design.

Adrift in Dystopia: The Failure of Brasília's Foundational Utopias

Even before its inauguration, Brasília's reality contradicted hopeful visions of the city as an agent of transformation. Violence and exploitation reinforced an unequal status quo fortified by common belief that the new capital was inherently utopian. The latent authoritarianism in the city's high modernist urban plan provoked feelings of alienation, which residents call *brasilite* in interviews with James Holston (*The Modernist* 24). This frequent discontentment spurred citizens to adopt the urban forms and lifestyles Costa's plan intended to negate through defamiliarization (*The Modernist* 24). This process of "Brazilianization" eased new residents' transition to the city yet undermined the egalitarian aims of Brasília's design by further tying the new capital to social structures rooted in colonial society.

A key example of Brazilianization is the privatization of the central area known as the Plano Piloto. NOVACAP rapidly strayed from the model of public ownership key to Costa's conception of the capital and sold access to the city's *superquadras*, a key tool of egalitarian integration.[64] As Holston describes, these basic residential units were a building block of

[64] Though incremental privatizations had occurred well before, NOVACAP created a full, open housing market in the Plano Piloto in 1965 (Holston, "The Spirit" 102).

Brasília's sociohistorical tabula rasa: "The apartment blocks of a *superquadra* are all equal . . . which prevents the hateful differentiation of social classes; that is, all the families share the same life together, the upper-echelon public functionary, the middle, and the lower" (*The Modernist* 20). Converted to private property, however, the structures remained out of reach for working-class citizens and traditional housing patterns remained intact.[65] This hasty betrayal of Costa's vision confined the poor to the (largely unplanned) periphery and exemplifies the state's ultimately ephemeral interest in the utopian social objectives of high modernist urbanism.

Though Costa and his team assumed that the capital's population would remain relatively small in the short term, most of the migrant workers known as *candangos* who constructed Brasília chose to remain in the Federal District. The high modernist goal of gradually constructing satellite cities radiating outward from the Plano Piloto quickly became impossible.[66] With little other housing available, the *candangos* formed squatter settlements in the city center, facing harassment by the GEB (NOVACAP's police) or forced resettlement to the rapidly expanding periphery (*The Modernist* 200).[67] The 1959 massacre at the Pacheco Fernandes Dantas work camp merits mention due to its brazen violence and subsequent erasure. When

[65] A similar process occurred along the Lago Paranoá, whose shoreline was initially designed as a bucolic, public area. In fact, the government actively promoted the occupation of the lake's southern shore to private interests as early as 1957. NOVACAP authorized the construction of rowhouses along the W-3 and W-4 avenues in the Asa Sul shortly thereafter, with company executives claiming most of the homes for their families. The Plano Piloto housing market became fully private in 1965 (Holston, "The Spirit" 102).

[66] Costa's plan did not specify a maximum population needed to begin construction of the satellite cities, though NOVACAP later put the number at 500,000 residents (Leitão and Ficher 107).

[67] Taguatinga, the Federal District's first satellite city, was officialized in 1958. In a clever ploy for mercy from the state, the settlement was first named Vila Sara Kubitschek.

workers protested rotten food and unfair labor practices during Carnaval of that year, the GEB killed several dozen *candangos* (*The Modernist* 339). As no authorities investigated the incident, however, there is still no official death toll. Though contemporary artists including Vladimir Carvalho, João Almino, and Adirley Queirós have helped salvage the memory of this and other events of authoritarian abuse in the Federal District, some similar instances of violence doubtless remain forgotten.[68]

The military dictatorship created a second wave of satellite cities in the western Federal District through forced resettlement of the remaining squatters. Luiz Alberto de Campos Gouvêa terms the Federal District's segregation social apartheid, detailing the compounding repercussions of these displacements including additional, expensive transportation costs for the majority of satellite city residents who work in the Plano Piloto ("A violência" 347). An exemplary case is that of Ceilândia, whose formation via a massive program of eviction and resettlement in 1970-1971 appears in archival footage in Queirós's *A cidade é uma só?* (2011).[69] Despite its violent origin, Luciana Saboia and Liz Sandoval note that Ceilândia is now a relatively socioeconomically stable community with 90% of the population having access to sanitary and transportation infrastructure. Further, the nearly four hundred thousand residents of the satellite city include Queirós, many of his collaborators, and several nationally-known hip-

[68] Carvalho's documentary *Conterrâneos velhos de guerra* (1991) at last raised awareness of the long-ignored Pacheco Fernandes Dantas massacre through interviews with *candangos* and city officials. Almino's historical novel *Cidade livre* (2010) includes a character who narrowly survives the same massacre.

[69] The government, attempting to rid the Plano Piloto of squatters, forcibly relocated roughly 80,000 people to a planned but unfinished community 22 kilometers west of the Plano Piloto (Jesus 50-51). The official name of the eviction initiative, the Campanha para a Erradicação das Invasões (CEI) inspired the new city's name and reiterated the official position that squatters were 'invading' territory, a linguistic delegitimization that placed blame soundly on the poor citizens instead of the government that failed to consider their needs.

hop groups.[70] Still, roughly 80% of the city's population commutes to work in the city center or nearby Taguatinga, revealing the limited economic possibilities within the satellite city. Further, as seen in Queirós's films, trauma rooted in the Ceilândia's violent origins continues to resonate.

Although the rich center versus poor periphery dynamic has grown less prevalent in other Brazilian cities including São Paulo, this division remains firmly entrenched in Brasília. In 1987 UNESCO recognized the entire Plano Piloto as a World Heritage Site, guaranteeing its preservation. Any change must pass through what Holston terms a tyranny of law and planning councils, making further social integration highly unlikely in the near term ("The Spirit" 107).[71] This decision assures that the wide horizons and striking architecture central to many of the included literary and cinematic works will remain intact. Still, conserving Brasília's high modernist aesthetics in the twenty-first century helps perpetuate the socioeconomic apartheid anathema to the city's designers.

The Contemporary City: Trends in Urbanism and Art

This history of segregation and violence underscores the failure of the political, mystical, and high modernist veins of utopianism central to Brasília's foundation. The military dictatorship further exacerbated social inequality in the capital by consistently prioritizing the appearance of progress and economic gains. While Brazil's redemocratization allowed for renewed utopianism,

[70] The best-known hip-hop group from Ceilândia is Viela 17, named after a street in the satellite city. The rapper known as GOG (Genival Oliveira Gonçalves), though based in Guará, DF, formed part of this group before his solo career won national acclaim. Some of GOG's lyrics were published as poetry in the anthology *A rima denuncia* (2010). Queirós's short documentary "Rap: o canto da Ceilândia" (2005) chronicles members of this musical community. Local rapper DJ Jamaika appears in both the documentary and *Branco sai, preto fica* (2014).

[71] Holston also notes the irony of the Portuguese term for this preservation being *tombado* (entombed) ("The Spirit" 107).

Gouvêa describes that the end of the dictatorship did little to ameliorate the dystopian aspects of the city's social organization: "Durante as décadas de 60 e de 70 e início da de 80 . . . [foram] pequenos os avanços das classes populares . . . em função do grau de repressão e cooptação imposto pelo Regime Militar. Acreditava-se, desta maneira, que com a Nova República a situação seria diferente. Ledo engano!" ("Brasília: A capital" 140). As Kohlsdorf et al. describe, Brasília remains highly divided in the twenty-first century. The city's rich have consolidated ownership of the Plano Piloto and the nearer sections of Lake Paranoá's shoreline,[72] with middle-class residents increasingly choosing life in gated communities far from the administrative center (61-62). Despite the persistence of inequality and segregation in the capital, the literary and cinematic works included in Chapters One and Two of this dissertation largely reject Adrián Gorelik's assertion that the dream of Brasília's utopian origins has become an unequivocal nightmare (359). Instead, most artists balance dystopian critique of the city's injustices with some degree of renewed utopianism rooted in Brasília's legacy of grand aspiration.

[72] A private home constructed to replicate the White House along the shore of Lake Paranoá is a particularly unsubtle monument to the failure of high modernist egalitarianism in the capital (Sadlier 199).

CHAPTER ONE

Utopia Lost: Reclaiming Hopefulness in Brasília's Literature

Literature in Brasília: A Brief Overview

Literature representing Brasília includes works from the city's prehistory and over five decades of texts produced by residents, visitors, and natives of the new capital.[73] The corpus of *brasiliense* literature is limited in comparison with São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, or Brazil's older urban centers. Still, the works that consider the concept of utopia provide ample material for this study. Eloísa Pereira Barroso divides Brasília's literary history into three main phases whose characteristics demonstrate changing belief in the capital's status as a utopian space. Literary texts composed shortly after JK's election mirror the optimistic political rhetoric justifying the project: "Os autores, crentes na arquitetura modernista, validam em seus textos a cidade planejada e exaltam a utopia de um projeto ousado, que trazia em seu bojo a promessa de levar o país à inserção definitiva na modernidade" (Barroso 60-61).[74] Confronted with the reality of the built city, subsequent writers adopted more critical positions juxtaposing the Plano Piloto's beauty with feelings of alienation and disillusionment.[75] Finally, contemporary authors portray

[73] The history of literature in Brasília has become the subject of considerable critical study including Luiz Carlos Guimarães Costa's extensively researched *História da literatura brasiliense* (2005).

[74] Barroso lists Joanyr de Oliveira, poet and editor of the laudatory anthology *Poetas de Brasília* (1964), alongside Antônio Miranda, Danilo Lobo, and Vinícius de Moraes as literary chroniclers of this first phase (61). Ginway also notes optimism related to Brasília in Jerônimo Monteiro's science fiction novel *Os visitantes do espaço* (1963), which presents an "image of the city as a mythic place of riches, utopian possibilities and achievement embodies the modern myth of urban space" (*Brazilian Science* 22).

[75] Barroso includes Clarice Lispector, Nicolas Behr, and Alexandre Pilati in this group. Sophia Beal also notes elements of social critique in José Marques da Silva's memoir *Diário de um*

Brasília's original utopian aura as definitively lost, focusing on the dual problems of economic oppression and degraded social space (60-68).[76] Whereas Barroso's appraisal of recent literature is perhaps exaggeratedly pessimistic, Beal adopts a more balanced view of production in the Federal District. In her historical overview of the capital's literature, the critic notes growing disillusionment in the first decades after Brasília's inauguration and underscores the importance of Nicolas Behr and the countercultural *poesia marginal* movement during the dictatorship (*The Art* 50-52).[77] Beal also highlights three principal themes that (to differing extents) reoccur across the capital's literary chronology: Brasília's unique origin story, its visual surprises, and its violence and inequality ("Brasília's Literature" 397).[78] As authors continue to negotiate these issues, the city's legacy of utopian thought and its disappointing reality remain fundamental literary themes.

This chapter analyzes works of literature evincing varied perspectives on the challenge of utopianism in contemporary Brasília. The choice of well-known authors and poets highlights this theme's foundational importance while revealing the limited dissemination of production by the

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candango (1963), João Guimarães Rosa's "As margens da alegria" (1962), and Geraldo Vieira's historical novel *Paralelo 16: Brasília* (1966) (*The Art* 48-50).

[76] Barroso names Daniel Mota, Paulo Kauim, and João Almino as representative of this group.

[77] In his study of the city's poetry, José Roberto de Almeida Pinto analyzes the work of prominent countercultural artists like Behr, Francisco (Chico) Alvim, Luis Turiba, Paulo Tovar, and José Sóter, though he also notes the popularity of the older, more traditional Cassiano Nunes during the same period.

[78] Renowned poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade's "Favelário nacional" (1984) centers on the city's inequality by juxtaposing "a sumptuous Brasília and a squalid Ceilândia" and contemplating each community's right to expression (Beal, *The Art* 54).

city's peripherical and marginalized writers.[79] The chapter opens with the earliest included texts yet subsequent transitions trace thematic parallels and juxtapositions rather than chronology. The first texts analyzed, Clarice Lispector's *crônicas* "Brasília" (1964) and "Brasília esplendor" (1974), precede the temporal focus of this dissertation yet merit inclusion due to their continued thematic relevance and influence on posterior authors. The next works are two novels by João Almino, an author explicitly inspired by Lispector: *Idéias para onde passar o fim do mundo* (1987) and *As cinco estações do amor* (2001). While Almino's texts balance continued hope for the capital with resigned acceptance of its failure as a utopian project, Milton Hatoum's novel *A noite da espera* (2017) depicts the city as an oppressive space well suited for dictatorship. The next analyzed works are selected poems by Nicolas Behr, the capital's unofficial poet laureate. Behr's iconoclastic, humorous production eschews despair and instead balances utopian re-imagining with pointed criticism of the real city's social and spatial division. The final included text is Darcy Ribeiro's short, fictional work "Ivy-marãen: terra sem males" (1997), which depicts a highly optimistic vision of Brasília's future grounded in the aims of the city's founders. Where possible, the included analysis will highlight points of convergence and divergence as these writers negotiate Brasília's unique history of grand aspiration and the aftermath of its failures.

[79] In her 2020 monograph on the capital's cultural production, Beal brings much-needed attention and insightful analysis to the work of largely Afro-Brazilian slam poets and self-published writers from the satellite cities (*The Art* 135-189). Although many of these artists' production undoubtedly deserves inclusion in future analyses of utopianism in contemporary *brasiliense* literature, a lack of access to their work has prevented their inclusion in this dissertation.

Hoping on a Shattered Star: Clarice Lispector's Capital in Flux

No other literary depictions of Brasília share the outsized impact of Clarice Lispector's "Brasília" (1964, alternatively called "Brasília: cinco dias") and "Brasília Esplendor" (1974).[80] Lispector only visited Brasília on three occasions, yet Beal names her first *crônica* the "most famous piece of literature about Brasília" (*The Art* 395).[81] The same critic notes that both texts convey the author's contradictory emotional reaction to the capital through estrangement, mixed metaphors, and unconventional tense switching ("The Real" 2). Lispector's incisive evocation of temporal displacement and the interconnected nature of hopefulness and despair in the capital remain key touchstones for contemporary artists. Some, including João Almino and Ana Vaz, directly cite the *crônicas*. Others, like Glauber Rocha and Adirley Queirós, build on Lispector's portrait of unmoored time and indefinable alienation without directly referencing the author's work.

Mixed tenses fortify Lispector's evocation of estrangement and her subtle critique of Brasília's political utopian aspirations in both *crônicas*. In the later text, the narrator includes metafictional, parenthetical commentary bringing this technique to the foreground: "(Noto aqui um acontecimento que me espanta: estou escrevendo no passado, no presente e no futuro. Estarei

[80] The influence of these *crônicas* corresponds with the author's importance in the wider field of Brazilian literature. Born to a Jewish, Ukrainian family, Lispector (1920-1977) immigrated to Recife as a toddler and spent most of her adult life in Rio de Janeiro, the city with which her work is most associated. Lispector's prose is consistently innovative, evoking complex existential and psychological reflections with surprising clarity. She remains among the most read and criticized Brazilian authors, with nearly her entire oeuvre translated into English.

[81] The *crônica* is a genre of short fiction generally published in newspapers with no direct equivalent in English.

sendo levitada? Brasília sofre de levitação.)" (73).[82] In the same text, Lispector combines atypical use of tense with paradox to describe the capital's temporal flux, "Brasília é um futuro que aconteceu no passado" (76). The political critique of this unusual sense of time is more apparent in "Brasília," as the author invokes fantasy to interrogate the goals of the city's founders. First, the narrator announces their prior death. Then, they identify the obviously fictional, disappeared society called the *brasiliários* as the prehistoric inhabitants of Brasília (67-68). This community represents an alternative past satirizing the promise of a historical tabula rasa. The inclusion of real historical figures alongside such fantastical elements compounds her critique, questioning the capital's capacity to inaugurate a new era by stating that the *brasiliários* founded Brasília, not Costa, Niemeyer or JK.

Lispector's consideration of space in the capital is similarly complex, underlined by the assertion in "Brasília" that, "Aqui é o lugar onde o espaço mais se parece com o tempo" (70). This statement, sandwiched between dashes with no direct explanation, appears to reference the city's lack of corners, a characteristic again described in the opening of "Brasília: Esplendor:" "Brasília é uma cidade abstrata. E não há como concretizá-la. É uma cidade redonda e sem esquinas" (71). Like time, then, the city's physicality escapes easy comprehension. In the earlier *crônica*, Lispector links this disconnect between city and subject with the concept of hope, claiming that her inability to establish close contact with the city did not make her despair (69). Beal also identifies continued hopefulness in Lispector's references to the city's beauty, arguing that the narrator sees the capital's architecture as embodying its initial, utopian promise ("The

[82] Citations of both *crônicas* refer to the collection of Lispector's non-fiction *Para não esquecer* (1993).

Real" 2). This relatively optimistic view of Brasília's spaces and structures, however, coexists with attributes making life in the Federal District dystopian for many of its residents.

In the earlier, pre-coup d'état *crônica*, Lispector identifies the latent authoritarianism of the city's high modernist plan: "A construção de Brasília: a de um Estado totalitário" (68). The author uses metaphor to criticize the quixotic utopianism of the capital's designers in the same text: "Foi construída sem lugar para ratos. Toda uma parte nossa, a pior, exatamente a que tem horror de ratos, essa parte não tem lugar em Brasília. Eles quiseram negar que a gente não presta. Construção com espaço calculado para as nuvens. O inferno me entende melhor. Mas os ratos, todos muito grandes, estão invadindo" (68). The planned city tried to reinvent the reality of its residents to the point of denying man's natural fear of rodents. To Beal, this passage "suggests that the utopian project banked more on exclusion than inclusion, pushing out what was natural, imperfect, and marginal in the name of progress" ("The Real" 2). By 1962, rats are already returning to the city in a blatant symbol of the failures of high modernist social engineering. Lispector retains hope for the capital's future yet uses dystopian imagery to reveal the failings obscured by continued belief in the city's foundational aspiration.

"Brasília esplendor" suggests that the capital's failures do not prevent renewed utopianism. Brasília again incites emotional turmoil alongside sensations of temporal and spatial dislocation, yet the text's only mention of rats is not critical but rather humorous. Hotel staff, unsolicited, assure the narrator there are no rats in the Hotel Nacional, implying that they read and literally interpreted "Brasília" (88). Lispector was undoubtedly proven right in arguing that Brasília's design would not radically reshape human behavior. Still, she minimizes dystopian imagery in describing her second visit to the city, instead stating simply that the capital became more human (85). This *crônica* balances rare moments of potentially apocalyptic imagery with

equanimous description of the city's unsuccessful, foundational utopian aspirations: "Brasília é o fracasso do mais espetacular sucesso do mundo. Brasília é uma estrela espatifada" (73). Despite awareness of this failure, Lispector's narrator describes deep affection for the capital: "Adoro Brasília. É contraditório? Mas o que é que não é contraditório?" (74). "Brasília: Esplendor" remains far from a straightforward, hopeful depiction of the capital, yet the author's continued appreciation for the city is notable given the prescience of the failures foreseen in "Brasília." The two *crônicas* combine strong criticism, ambivalence, and cautious optimism in their assessments of the capital. Brasília's initial utopian promises were unfounded, yet the strange, real city continues to inspire affection, alienation, hope, and disillusionment in equal measure.

João Almino: A Chronicler of Futures Lost and Found

Explicitly influenced by Lispector's depictions of the capital, João Almino has established himself at the forefront of subsequent literary representation of Brasília.[83] Almino remains best known for his first five novels, known as the "Brasília quintet," though his later works also include sections set in the capital.[84] Each of the author's novels employs a memorialist framing, yet his oeuvre contains considerable stylistic and aesthetic variation. His

[83] Born in Mossoró, Rio Grande do Norte, João Almino (1950-) is a writer and a career diplomat, a profession that led him to Brasília for the first time in 1970. Almino has published nonfictional texts on politics, literary criticism, and two short works on More's *Utopia* alongside seven novels: *Idéias para onde passar o fim do mundo*, *Samba-Enredo* (1994), *As cinco estações do amor* (2001), *O livro das emoções* (2004), *Cidade livre* (2010), *Enigmas da primavera* (2015), and *Entre facas, algodão* (2017). ("João Almino: Biografia"). In 2017, the author secured a prestigious chair in the Academia Brasileira de Letras. Almino has won several, major literary prizes and many of his novels have been published in translation.

[84] *Enigmas da primavera* (2015) and *Entre facas, algodão* (2017) both begin and end in Brasília, despite much of the plot taking place in Spain and the Brazilian Northeast, respectively.

earliest novels, *Idéias para onde passar o fim do mundo* (1987) and *Samba-enredo* (1994), are exuberantly experimental while later works prioritize realism. Principle themes include the city of Brasília, memory, hope, regret, and loss, all of which intersect with the concept of utopianism.

In the essay "Brasília, o mito; anotações para um ideário estético-literário," Almino describes the role of utopian thought in his first three novels.[85] No city, he claims, can define a novel. Still, Brasília's long history as a site of utopian desire, recounted with aplomb in the essay's opening, makes the capital a powerful literary setting: "E o que Brasília simboliza? A democracia. A racionalidade. A nação. O moderno. O futuro. E também, claro, o poder, a alienação, o encastelamento, a corrupção, o autoritarismo, o misticismo e a irracionalidade" (10). This list reflects Almino's complex and nuanced vision of utopianism in the capital. Though fully aware of the failures of the city's foundational aspirations, the author affirms belief in Brasília's ability to inspire new utopian thought: "é possível extrair um resto de esperança, a constante lembrança de seus mitos e utopia e a insatisfação com a realidade que alimenta a boa leitura" (19). This irrepressible hopefulness combines with critical dystopian elements in Almino's novels to create a sense of cautious optimism in line with post-utopian thought.

The End of the World or A New Beginning: Paradoxical Inspiration in Almino's Début

Idéias para onde passar o fim do mundo (1987) considers Brasília's flawed reality in relation to its utopian origin narratives. An experimental exercise in memorialist fiction, this début novel contains a constellation of narrative arcs which coalesce in a complex portrait of utopian thought, disillusionment, and apocalyptic prediction. As suggested by Beatriz Resende in

[85] The cited version of this essay comes from the collection *Escrita em contraponto: ensaios literários*.

the preface to the second edition of *Idéias*, the text's structural and metafictional innovation mirrors the author's own hopes and fears about Brazil's return to democracy. Though aesthetically and philosophically complex, the novel largely eschews anti-utopianism. Instead, *Idéias* reveals the author's counterintuitive faith in the city's origins to inspire contemporary social dreaming. The Brasília of *Idéias* is far removed from the paradigm-shifting hopes tied to the capital's construction, yet Almino convincingly portrays the city as a place where utopian thought remains an influential force.

The aspiring filmmaker Mário Camargo de Castro, now deceased, narrates the first thirteen chapters of *Idéias* from beyond the grave. Much of the novel is based on Mário's unfinished film script, though Almino further links the various characters through their appearance in a photograph taken in the Praça dos Três Poderes.[86] The occasion of this structuring photo is the inauguration of Brazil's first black president, Paulo Antônio Fernandes, in Year 1 of a historical timeline not fully separated from our own. Silvinha, Fernandes's daughter, assumes the role of narrator for the final two chapters. Adopting a more straightforward tone, Silvinha contests many aspects of Mário's narration while outlining her own hopes for Brasília's future. Among the characters whose stories Mário narrates, three stand out for their ties to utopianism: Berenice, Íris, and Eva. Berenice's journey is that which most neatly encapsulates the concept of post-utopianism. This young migrant from the Northeast experiences segregation and disillusionment yet continues to draw paradoxical inspiration from the capital. The mystic Íris and her multiple apocalyptic visions underline the similar resiliency

[86] Scott evocatively describes this plaza, Brasília's version of a public square, by emphasizing its immensity: "There *is* a square. But what a square! The vast, monumental Plaza of the Three Powers, flanked by the Esplanade of the Ministries, is of such a scale as to dwarf even a military parade…" (121).

of mystical utopianism in Brasília. Finally, Eva's descent into hopelessness marks a rare case of unredeemed despair in Almino's oeuvre. Though total loss of faith is possible, Brasília's foundational aspirations remain powerful, if unlikely, sources of inspiration.

The opening chapter, "Fantasia para o Plano Piloto," demonstrates Almino's profound interest in the city's history as an object of utopian desire. He quotes from Dom Bosco's dream and Lúcio Costa's master plan while referencing early politicians who dreamed of a central capital (though not JK) (20). Mário admits that, "A cidade pertencia cada vez mais a um Brasil sem sonhos e desiludido," yet describes that, with the recent presidential election, "a utopia do desprezo completo pelo poder ganhava força" (20, 18). The myth of Brazil as the land of the future remains powerful, but, "Na realidade, o país entrava num jogo de possíveis, que ia da felicidade ao desespero" (18). Just prior, the narrator describes the opening of his film in an epic style that alludes to the abuse of laborers during the capital's construction: "No começo uma mistura de Eisenstein com Cecil B. de Mille, Brasília em grande angular. Ao som do Guarani, prédios euforicamente construindo-se por escravos voluntários e modernos, operários voltados para o futuro da humanidade" (15). Almino thus foregrounds the city's original sin alongside its initial aspirations, reminding the reader that a utopian era disconnected from colonial oppression cannot be built by mistreated workers. Still, as the various character arcs reveal, this legacy of disingenuous utopianism does not invalidate the utility of utopian thought in the contemporary city.

The opening pages also introduce the concept of realistic utopianism as Almino describes the characters' ongoing capacity to dream in spite of the capital's history of unfulfilled aspiration: "Queriam encher o ar e o espaço do Planalto com seus sonhos e respirar essência de flores secas. Queriam amar de novo e diferente. Buscavam viver a realidade que haviam

inventado: eram realistas utópicos" (24-25). The novel's characters do not desire instant, wholesale improvement, instead dreaming within the confines of their reality. This initial consideration foreshadows the novel's argument that, despite the compounded failures marking Brasília's history, cautious optimism remains preferable to apathy or nihilism. The various character trajectories of *Idéias* reflect the limits of aspiration in the contemporary capital while engaging with tentative, forward-looking utopianism in line with Campos's theory of post-utopia.

Berenice's arc depicts utopianism rooted in Brasília's origins as an unexpected counterbalance for the disillusionment experienced by those exploited in the contemporary Federal District. A migrant from the *sertão*, Berenice struggles to find her footing in Brasília. She experiences the estrangement known colloquially as *brasilite* while working in the Plano Piloto and becomes increasingly hopeless after moving to the satellite city of Gama: "Brasília e seus arredores haviam se tornado inabitáveis . . . Estava desiludida. Sabia que melhorar de condição seria difícil. Sua vida no Gama só tenderia a piorar e seu destino seria voltar a ser o que era na Varzinha [her hometown]" (60). The character leaves Brasília with little hope, yet she later adopts a balanced view of the capital that recognizes the ongoing power of the city's foundational aspirations alongside its oppressive characteristics:

> No regresso ao sertão, Brasília ficou na cabeça de Berenice como o símbolo do moderno, do belo, do limpo, do civilizado, do culto, e também da violência, do poder. Brasília ficou em sua cabeça como sonho de liberdade, pesadelo de castigo, intervalo para viver, lembrança de Zé Maria. Brasília era, para Berenice, só uma ponte de fuga de si mesma e de regresso a si mesma. (71)

Although this symbolic power does not lead to the targeted action generally associated with realistic utopia, it does connote a surprising degree of hopefulness given Berenice's compounded disappointments in Brasília. Despite the dystopian events that characterize her arc, Brasília's legacy of utopian aspiration prevents Berenice from succumbing to despair.

Íris's complex narrative arc reveals the continued impact of Brasília's mystical strain of utopianism. Though initially disillusioned in the aftermath of an early apocalyptic vision, the medium and prophetess Íris finds reason to hope anew following a tortuous series of events invoking mystical, science fictional, and religious imagery tied to utopianism and dystopia (129). At her spiritual nadir, Íris recalls a past vision of Dom Bosco at a *candomblé* ceremony in Salvador when the priest "a aconselhava a abrir-se, pôr-se para fora, viver para os outros. Dizia-lhe que ela tinha uma missão a cumprir: salvar-se a si própria e ao mundo. Deveria rumar para o Planalto Central para ajudar a criar a nova civilização" (132). Apocalyptic nihilism and mystical utopianism remain in a state of tension throughout Íris's journey. Though she continually searches for salvation, as illustrated by multiple sequences heavily inspired by João Guimarães Rosa's *Grande sertão: veredas* (1956) and her decision to found the Jardim da Salvação religious compound, renewed despair consistently looms on the horizon (137-143).[87]

After Íris constructs the Jardim da Salvação's pyramidal temple, kidnappers abduct the President and war (apparently) breaks out in Brasília. Again reflecting on the figure of Dom Bosco, Íris wonders if the paradisiacal city he prophesized in the region might finally come to fruition following nuclear bombardment: "ela guardava a esperança de que, da anarquia e do caos reordenados, nasceria tudo de novo . . . E os sobreviventes mergulhariam numa nova região

[87] The fictional Jardim da Salvação recurs throughout Almino's oeuvre and shares many characteristics with the Vale do Amanhacer religious community.

do espaço e do tempo" (152). Hope and resignation remain paired throughout her tortuous emotional and intellectual journey, demonstrating the resilience of utopianism despite Íris's conviction that the apocalypse is actively occurring. The prophetess's labyrinthine trajectory comes to an uncertain conclusion as she returns to the Jardim da Salvação following a visit to the Veredas-Mortas crossroads from *Grande sertão: veredas*:

> Agora, que suas crenças já não existiam, que chave podia ela deter dos mistérios do mundo? Ela não tinha a solução para nada.
>
> Olhou no horizonte o claro difuso para os lados de Brasília e ainda se permitiu mais esta iluminação: a de que aquela cidade era como uma droga, ou seja, uma cidade sem conteúdo, que podia ser o que ela bem imaginasse... (171)

Ultimately, hope and despair are nearly inseparable in the Brasília of *Idéias*. Disillusionment and the loss of faith counterintuitively spur new belief in the possibility of reshaping the capital through utopian thought.

Unlike the comparatively ambiguous trajectories of Berenice and Íris, Eva's suicide embodies a rare, definitive triumph of despair in Almino's Brasília. Though she first claims to believe in a brighter future for the world if not for Brazil, Eva eventually abandons hope: "Melhorar, como ato de vontade, lhe parecia forçado. E, por isso, preferia acreditar mesmo no beco sem saída. Já não tinha futuro. Apenas o passado. Não fazia mais planos. A esperança era a simples crença no acaso . . . Não acreditava mais em vitórias ou redenções" (104-105). Eva's aversion to utopianism is crystalline; she sees no possibility of the future improving on the tragic present. Unable to move past her pessimistic, anti-utopian belief that Brazil is on a course of

unstoppable decadence, she takes her own life (120-121).[88] While Eva's death acknowledges that nihilism is a possible response to Brasília's status quo, such anti-utopianism remains rare within the broader panorama of *Idéias*.

Silvinha's narration during the final chapters forms the novel's most cohesive endorsement of cautious hope in Brasília. For Silvinha, the capital inherently pushes its inhabitants towards continual imagination and, thus, some degree of engagement with utopianism (193). Silvinha reveals her own affinity for utopian dreaming in the final chapter. She imagines the novel's characters on an enormous stage on the Esplanada dos Ministérios. After a time, they descend: "Desciam por eixos largos e compridos, que levavam a horizontes abertos e infinitos. A realidade criava seus sonhos nesses espaços do puro, etéreo nada, encerrada no centro do Brasil" (204). The narrator describes the accompanying sunset as belonging to the end of the world, obscuring whether the characters march towards a utopian future or the apocalypse (204). Silvinha herself does not know, asking, "Haverá esperança?" and declaring on the novel's final page that, "não houve história. Brasília era demasiado artificial. Era apenas sonho ou pesadelo de uma época. Imagem do céu e do inferno" (205, 206). Through some combination of geography, urbanism, and the legacy of utopian dreaming in the city, the Brasília of *Idéias* stimulates utopian thought. This hope, though, is inextricable from the doubt occasioned by the failures of its initial objectives. All dreams remain paired with disillusionment.

[88] In contrast to both his own phantasmagorical return and the multiple possible endings for Berenice's story he suggests, Mário's quick abandonment of Eva's story at the end of her chapter connotes an unmistakable sense of finality regarding her suicide: "tive que sair rápido de Eva, para nao morrer por uma segunda vez" (121).

Second Spring: Post-utopianism in *As cinco estações do amor* (2001)

As cinco estações do amor (2001) initiates a less aesthetically experimental stage of Almino's production that nonetheless maintains a keen interest in utopianism. The novel relates the protagonist Ana Kaufman's memories over roughly fifteen months in 1999 and 2000 in straightforward, emotionally resonant prose.[89] Ana, a fifty-five-year-old divorcee, experiences despair and renewed hope as the new millennium approaches. Though she feels optimistic after the return of Berta, a member of the *inúteis* friends' group from their youth, this character is murdered on New Year's Eve. The protagonist subsequently attempts suicide, but her widower neighbor Carlos saves her. After a brief return to her hometown in Minas Gerais, Ana accepts Carlos's proposal of marriage and returns to Brasília to begin a new, hopeful chapter of her life.

Two key aspects of the novel that call attention to utopian thought are Ana's theory of *instantaneísmo* and the urban landscape's reflection of the narrator's relative degree of hopefulness. *Instantaneísmo*, a philosophy of complete and total focus on the present moment, at first seems represent an anti-utopian disregard for the future. In his essay on Almino's first four novels, Pedro Meira Monteiro argues that this belief system is the only possible source of solace in a Brasília otherwise marked by failure and ruin:

> ...o instante é nossa única morada possível, o lugar fugitivo a que pertencemos sem pertencer, espaço exíguo em que o tempo se condensa e o sujeito descobre que sua liberdade talvez tenha menos a ver com os desenhos avidamente projetados sobre o

[89] Kaufman first appears in *Samba-enredo*, exemplifying the frequent reappearance of characters throughout Almino's first four novels. Íris is the lone character from *Idéias* to recur in his subsequent work, making appearances in *Cidade livre* and *Enigmas da primavera*.

futuro que com o compromisso profundo diante daquilo que se passa agora mesmo diante de seus olhos.[90] (68)

Monteiro correctly identifies the aversion to grand utopian ambition in Almino's oeuvre while noting the potential utility of deeper engagement with the present. Still, Ana's reassessment of *instantaneísmo* in the concluding section of *As cinco estações* signals the character's cautious re-engagement with utopianism.

Ana's descriptions of Brasília's landscape reflect a similar return to post-utopian aspiration. While the narrator consistently associates the city with the hopelessness (or lack thereof) she feels in a given moment, several passages belie her professed disregard for the future and past. Denilson Lopes connects Ana's journey closely with the titular cycle of seasons: "A paisagem de Brasília é toda afetiva, um mistério em meio ao excesso de luz nas suas quatro estações, e mais uma, como um presente, uma conquista" (128).[91] The capital of *As cinco estações* reflects a wide range of aspirations and disillusionments as Ana confronts personal frustrations, the general ennui shared by her peers, and incidents of random violence.[92] Still, the decision to include a fifth season after Ana's personal nadir signifies a move away from anti-utopianism as the new millennium begins.

Almino bookends Ana's journey with the appearance of emotionally charged, question-mark-shaped clouds. In the opening chapter, this symbol appears as Ana drives to visit Chicão, the *inútil* with whom she remains closest (13). The protagonist first associates this cloud

[90] The revised version of Meira's article translated into English excludes this quotation.

[91] Zaida Capote Cruz also notes Ana's emotional relationship with landscape in her review of the novel (159).

[92] This essential connection between urban space and emotional state persists throughout Almino's subsequent novels.

formation with her personal loss of faith in Brasília's foundational aims: "Brasília era 'a cidade moderna e o futuro do mundo', como papai dizia. . . O Plano Piloto não era bem uma cidade. Era uma idéia – idéia de moderno, de futuro, minha idéia de Brasil" (17). Looking at the contemporary city from the central Eixo Monumental, however, Ana acutely senses her own lack of direction alongside the city's failures. Still, the protagonist has not yet embraced a nihilistic, anti-utopian perspective on Brasília's future.

Ana then recalls the dictatorship's role in quashing the idealized utopianism typical of the 1960s that united the *inúteis*: "não era sucesso, poder ou dinheiro o que queríamos. Era mudar a sociedade, a política, o país, o mundo . . . o futuro era nosso. Éramos companheiros de uma viagem de prazer; construíamos uma nova era, contra o egoísmo e a caretice" (19). The policies of segregation and violence reinforced by the military regime, however, quickly curtailed the friends' aspirations: "As cidades adquirem o ar dos tempos por que passam. Brasília, que tinha sido promessa de socialismo e, para mim pessoalmente, de liberdade, não usava mais disfarce. A desolação de suas cidades-satélites já a asfixiava. Respirávamos vinte e quatro horas por dia o ar envenenado da ditadura militar" (21-22). As her awareness of the dystopian aspects of the capital's social and political organization grew, Ana abandoned her belief in Brasília's ability to incite or host radical utopian change. This early disillusionment makes a return to large-scale social dreaming unlikely in the novel's present. Though not fully fatalistic, Ana finds little reason to believe in an improved future for herself or her adopted city.

In 1999, Ana's youthful hopefulness remains a distant memory: "Minha juventude está perdida. A Brasília do meu sonho de futuro está morta. Reconheço-me nas fachadas de seus prédios precocemente envelhecidos, na sua modernidade precária e decadente" (40). Her first presentation of *instantaneísmo* further confirms the protagonist's resignation to a life without

aspiration. Reality does not exist beyond the present moment, she declares, therefore, "Deixarei de lado o futuro, para não construir ilusões e nem prever desastres, o que, em vez de evitá-los, talvez os acelere" (50). For Ana, the side effects of utopianism and dystopian thought invalidate their usefulness. While not strictly nihilist, *instantaneísmo* represents a high degree of conformity and the absence of long-term hope. Decades after bearing witness to the failures of Brasília's utopian aims, Ana remains disengaged.

Despite her stated disavowal of social dreaming, Ana feels renewed hope when Berta returns to Brasília. Though the protagonist has few expectations of bonding with a friend who spent decades outside of Brazil and transitioned from male to female, she quickly finds Berta to be a much-needed confidant. Her friend's positive influence sparks the novel's first, limited reconsideration of *instantaneísmo* in which Ana acknowledges the resilience of utopian aspiration: "Nenhuma realidade é imutável, todas as idéias podem renascer, os homens podem aspirar a melhores formas de viver, mesmo quando piores vão surgindo, o mundo muda instantaneamente para melhor e para pior ao mesmo tempo" (95). Though Ana still believes an immutable equilibrium stymies the impact of hopeful thinking, this reflection marks a tentative step towards re-engagement with her community. Berta's death, however, pushes Ana towards complete despair.

Devastated by her friend's murder on New Year's Eve, the protagonist becomes obsessed with death. She abandons all belief in the validity of hope while associating Brasília's design with her personal failures: "Por um instante ainda penso na aventura que me trouxe ao Planalto Central, como para cumprir uma missão. Logo me ocorre que, desde o começo, a estrutura monumental de Brasília traçava os limites daquela minha aventura" (169). Feeling powerless in the grand scale of the Plano Piloto, Ana's past resentments resurge. She angrily describes

destroying Brasília, “Esta é minha revolta, minha revolução. Chega de sobrevida medíocre e acomodada. Tivesse uma bomba aqui, explodia a casa, Brasília, o mundo, esta obra de um Deus mal-humorado” (170). This confluence of personal despair and anti-utopianism marks the protagonist’s nadir. Convinced that both she and Brasília are irredeemable failures, she sets fire to her house and shoots herself.

As Ana convalesces, Chicão’s husband Marcelo outlines a fundamental truth of Almino’s Brasília: “Está errado dizer que a esperança é a última que morre. Ela não morre nunca” (175). Ana indeed finds unexpected cause for hope through an unlikely connection to Brasília’s mystical utopian origins. When visiting the ruins of her house, she discovers a vial of dirt collected with the *inúteis* at the Jardim da Salvação compound in their youth (179). This physical symbol of Ana’s past desires does not instigate a return to uninhibited social dreaming. Nonetheless, Brasília’s foundational utopian aspirations again spark renewed hopefulness, or at least prevent a slide into nihilism.

Back in Brasília after a brief stay in her hometown, Ana again revises *instantaneísmo*. In a major departure, the protagonist accepts a post-utopian, cautiously hopeful perspective on the future that recognizes, instead of denying, her past failures:

> Não acredito mais em aproveitar o instante para negar o fluxo do tempo. Prefiro uma acomodação emocionada, uma negociação sofrida com a adversariedade, a coragem de continuar abrindo picadas pelos cerrados da existência, em vez de abandonar tudo com a esperança de encontrar o paraíso. Pois o paraíso foi esfacelado e seus restos estão perdidos na poeira do tempo, apenas topamos com migalhas dele aqui e ali, que podemos coletar, como *objets trouvés* . . . Quero abraçar cada fragmento da existência e não um todo vazio, descobrir a possibilidade que se esconde em cada coisa inerte, em cada vida,

> em cada movimento, possibilidade de construir e reconstruir com o que está aqui, em vez de procurar pelo que não existe nem pode existir. (188-189)

Her belief in Brasília as a potential paradise is extinct, as are her earlier hopes for uncompromised revolution. Still, Ana renews her focus on the possibility of constructing a better future on a small scale. Instead of hoping in vain for a utopian tabula rasa in her own life, Ana commits to critically assessing her past and present while striving for post-utopian improvement.

Almino challenges even this cautious optimism when Ana survives an attempted murder soon after returning to the capital. Although the protagonist understandably feels renewed hopelessness after killing the disarmed assassin, she reiterates her new, more optimistic version of *instantaneísmo* and avoids spiraling into renewed fatalism. Gazing at Brasília for a final time, Ana identifies the city as a space of hope despite its failures:

> Tenho outros olhos e outro coração para as paisagens de sempre. A cidade já não me assombra, e as esperanças que à minha revelia, me gera estão ao alcance da minha mão. . . . Brasília deixou de ser minha prisão voluntária. É a cidade de Diana, caçadora de ilusões; de sonhos perdidos entre paisagens de desolação. Porque amo amar, quero viver neste espaço em que a visão do futuro foi preservada entre fósseis e artifícios deste novo milênio. Construir uma cidade do nada é uma aposta pela vida. Quero viver na fronteira que avança sobre o imenso vazio. Reconstruir-me pelas cinzas. (202-203)

Despite having failed to consolidate wholesale utopian change, Almino's Brasília reflects the hopes and disappointments of its residents. As Ana realizes that the capital will never reshape its subjects into an idealized society, she at last understands her responsibility to strive for post-utopian change.

The question mark-shaped cloud formation returns in the novel's penultimate paragraph, at once highlighting Ana's renewed sense of optimism and casting this engagement into doubt (203). Though Ana has recommitted to utopian thinking, she is pursued by a question mark overhead. Will her newfound hopefulness last? Almino provides no firm answer, yet Ana's self-criticism and revised, post-utopian *instantaneísmo* augur well for her future. Utopian thinking is never free of doubt and disillusionment in Almino's Brasília, but for the moment, at least, Ana remains cautiously hopeful.

The Long Wait for Freedom: Milton Hatoum's Brasília

Milton Hatoum's literature remains closely associated with his hometown of Manaus, but his recent novel *A noite da espera* (2017) divides its narrative between Brasília in the years 1968-1972 and Paris from 1977-1979.[93] The work is lightly autobiographical. Martim, the protagonist whose occasional diary entries comprise the text, is the same age as Hatoum during the author's residence in the capital. [94] Despite its geographical displacement, *A noite da espera* shares much in common with Hatoum's Amazonian texts; the novel's Brasília preserves the

[93] Milton Hatoum (1952-) is one of Brazil's most-awarded and best-selling literary authors. Born and raised in Manaus, Hatoum attended high school in Brasília before pursuing multiple graduate degrees both in Europe and at the Universidade de São Paulo (USP) before and after beginning his literary career. His bibliography at the time of writing is as follows: *Relato de um certo oriente* (1989), *Dois irmãos* (2000), *Cinzas do norte* (2005), *Órfãos de Eldorado* (2008), *A noite da espera* (2017), and *Pontos de fuga* (2019), all novels, as well as the short story collection *A cidade ilhada* (2009).

[94] *A noite da espera* is the first volume of a planned trilogy known as *O lugar mais sombrio*. The second novel in this series, *Pontos de fuga* (2019), follows a depressed, alcoholic Martim in São Paulo while continuing to narrate his life in Paris. Unlike the previous novel, however, *Pontos de fuga* is comprised in large part of memories and letters written by the protagonist's acquaintances and friends. In a 2017 interview with Ubiratan Brasil, Hatoum stated that the third novel in this series will be narrated by a Brazilian woman in Paris.

relationship between geography, interpersonal affection, and social organization which Hatoum calls indissoluble in his work set in Manaus (*Revista Magma* 27). *A noite da espera*'s setting during the dictatorship also continues the line of political critique identified by Daniel Piza in *Dois irmãos* (2000) and *Cinzas do norte* (2005), with Martim's negative experiences reflecting the author's memories of Brasília's atmosphere of denouncement and violence (18). Though Hatoum now affirms personal appreciation for Brasília,[95] *A noite da espera* depicts a decisively disillusioned, highly critical portrait of a dystopian city whose design facilitates surveillance and political repression.[96]

The novel begins as Martim, exiled in Paris, revisits the written memories he brought from Brazil. Though he initially describes a vague sense of hope for the future in his diary entries, Martim's experiences in the capital steer him firmly towards despair. For the protagonist, Brasília becomes inextricable from the military dictatorship that takes advantage of the city's open spatiality to violently repress political dissidence. At the same time, the regime's authoritarianism provides ample opportunity for those, like Martim's father Rodolfo, willing to conform. While the protagonist grows disillusioned with the city and Rodolfo, his cowardly refusal to protest or otherwise resist the dictatorship leaves him increasingly isolated from positive role models who might inspire the young man to imagine and work towards a brighter future. In exile, the older Martim remains politically disengaged and resigned to despair as Hatoum underscores his fatalism.

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[95] Hatoum describes revisiting Brasília when speaking with Ubiratan Brasil: "Fiquei encantado com a cidade, que une solidão, poeira e também violência."

[96] The book's back cover plainly states, "pode ser lido como um romance da desilusão, que lança ao future o travo amargo de jovens estudantes cujo sonho era um país mais humanizado e menos desigual e injusto."

The novel's inciting incident occurs when Martim's mother, Lina, leaves Rodolfo for another man. Hoping for a fresh start away from São Paulo, Rodolfo secures a job as an engineer with NOVACAP and takes his son with him to Brasília.[97] For Martim, Brasília is initially a blank canvas. His first interaction with the city is one of disorientation, as he loses himself among the superquadras of the Asa Sul (26-27). As he wanders, he repeatedly notes the low sky and extensive horizons that connote a sense of possibility. While the protagonist first views the city as strange yet beautiful, he rapidly comes to perceive its openness as a conduit for surveillance and authoritarian violence.

Hatoum cleverly reveals the city's oppressive nature through a series of three boat voyages in March 1968, gradually introducing dystopian imagery that foreshadows rising political repression and the dissolution of Rodolfo and Martim's relationship. The pair first enjoy a canoe trip on Lake Paranoá before a guard bars them from the prestigious Iate Clube. Rodolfo's profound indignation triggers a redoubling of efforts to assimilate to the conservative culture of the capital's political and economic elite. Hatoum reveals his changing priorities before the second trip, when he chooses work over Martim's invitation to row. Though the protagonist claims to enjoy himself on his solo trip, his description of the capital reflects growing disillusionment: "Brasília dava uma impressão de cidade vazia, abandonada às pressas" (36). This vaguely dystopian image foreshadows the young man's own escape from the capital and, as revealed by the subsequent canoe trip, hints at the dictatorship's ability to control movement in the city limits.

[97] Their prior residence in the Paraíso neighborhood of São Paulo implies the capital's infernal characteristics.

The episode culminating in the third boat trip consolidates the city's descent into authoritarian violence. Martim takes a bus to the cinema instead of joining his friends at an anti-government protest in the Asa Sul. Onboard, he observes the police stop a car and assault the driver and passenger, describing the city in obviously dystopian terms:

> …ir da Asa Sul à Norte era como viajar para outra cidade, não há ruas nem becos sinuosos por onde fugir, os imensos espaços livres de Brasília são uma armadilha. Escutava gritos e barulho de bombas, as lojas do setor comercial estavam fechadas, caminhei entre as superquadras e vi na W3 um ônibus parado e vazio, que ia à Vila Planalto. (41-42)

Martim now perceives the dictatorship's violent repression and its appropriation of the city's open design. After a long walk home, he rows alone on the Lago Paranoá, absentmindedly steering towards the lakeside Palácio da Alvorada presidential residence before falling asleep. Secret service agents awaken him at gunpoint and confine him in the same, squalid cell as his colleagues, who have been arrested for political dissidence. When the protagonist returns home, Rodolfo's only concern is for himself; he accuses his son of risking his job at NOVACAP through participation in the political protest (42-46). Soon thereafter, Rodolfo tells Martim he won't help him if he is arrested again and the two rapidly become estranged (51). The young man perceives his father's authoritarianism as paralleling that of the regime. The confiscation of the canoe by the authorities further underscores the impossibility of reconciliation.

Several characters fill the paternal void in Martim's life, each representing a potential response to the city in crisis. The first is Jorge Alegre, a leftist bookstore owner based on a historical figure. Alegre provides guidance during the protagonist's early days in Brasília and, later, gives him a job in his store. Martim again perceives the threat of government surveillance

and censorship when two spies infiltrate the bookseller's planned screening of the banned Cuban film *La muerte de un burócrata* (Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1966) (159). Though Martim admires his boss, he chooses to remain politically disengaged with the small exception of helping his friends publish the lightly censored *Tribo* magazine. Alegre's arrest in the novel's final pages underscores the risks of clandestine dissent, yet the protagonist's fate reveals perils of inaction.

Another potential role model is the student protest leader Lázaro, whose actions reveal belief in the possibility of utopian change in Brasília. Unfortunately, Martim cannot overcome his jealousy of his girlfriend Dinah's admiration for the other young man. Unlike the protagonist, Lázaro comes from a poor family and thus cannot ignore the dystopian reality of social segregation in Brasília. For his part, Martim only glimpses the capital's apartheid while visiting Lázaro's new home in under-construction Ceilândia in 1970: "Ceilândia parecia outra existência na trama do tempo, a abominação da miséria me angustiava, como se a vida na Asa Norte estivesse ameaçada" (108). Whereas Lázaro protests the authoritarianism that created such a shockingly impoverished heterotopia in the supposedly egalitarian Federal District, Martim merely frets about what the existence of such a place means for his middle-class lifestyle. Though he describes regretting his past cowardice while in exile, Martim never follows the inspirational example of Lázaro's utopianism, nurturing his resentments until the novel's end.

Martim's third potential mentor is Ambassador Faisão, a tragic yet prescient figure whose decadence parallels the failure of Brasília's original utopian aspirations. Excluded from the foreign ministry due to his liberalism and declining mental health, the character represents the unlikelihood of a return to more moderate politics in the capital. His speech on the folly of unbridled optimism in the dystopian city stands out as one of the novel's most incisive passages:

> Muita gente se esforça para fingir que tudo está bem, que vive no melhor dos mundos e vira as constas para a infâmia. Meu próprio filho tem a cabeça fora do lugar. Finge que está alheio à política, ignora que há um cerco em Brasília. Tudo está ficando mais complicado. Depois do AI-5, o medo tomou conta. A liberdade é uma quimera. Essa noite macabra é muito longa, não vai acabar tão cedo assim. (158)

Here, Hatoum reveals the danger of the *doxa* that Brasília is inherently utopian. Continued confidence in the city as a symbol of progress, equality, and freedom only serves to sustain the repressive status quo under the dictatorship. The influence of Ambassador Faisão's pessimism eventually proves decisive as Martim, fully disillusioned, heeds his calls to abandon Brasília. Accepting the futility of aspiration in the capital, the protagonist resignedly departs for São Paulo.

As the novel nears its denouement, Hatoum redoubles the dystopian imagery in Martim's memories. He and Dinah describe their high school campus, once a refuge, as a ruin (196). The situation in the satellite cities, always precarious, has also worsened significantly by the end of 1972: "a polícia do GDF senta o sarrafo nos pobres de Ceilândia e das outras cidades-satélites" (206). During their last day together, Dinah contributes a final dire image, claiming that "Brasília toda está doente e precisa ser internada" (234). The dictatorship has efficiently taken advantage of Brasília's layout to repress political opposition and segregate the poor workers whose existence reveals the failure of the capital's initial utopian aims. The authoritarian practices briefly veiled by Brasília's strange beauty upon Martim's arrival now appear ubiquitous and insurmountable.

A noite da espera would be an exemplary critical dystopian portrait of authoritarianism in the capital if not for its striking pessimism. The military regime builds on the lack of actual

reforms despite the utopian rhetoric justifying the new capital's construction, exploiting the city's openness and divisions to exert control. Martim's growing awareness of this dire situation, consolidated by the arrest of the *Tribo* contributors, suggests that utopian thought is dangerous and near-term change impossible. Despite his increasing ability to perceive the capital's flaws, the admittedly cowardly protagonist perpetuates their existence through inaction. By the novel's conclusion, he flees to São Paulo with no hope of sociopolitical improvement and no objective other than avoiding arrest. The older, exiled Martim's ongoing disillusionment and disengagement furthers this nearly nihilistic depiction of Brasília and Brazil, setting the stage for the character's depressed apathy in the second volume of *O lugar mais sombrio*.

Escape to Braxília: Nicolas Behr's Utopian Imagination

Poet Nicolas Behr's extensive oeuvre spans decades of Brasília's history, providing a consistently critical, clever, and humorous perspective on life in the capital.[98] For Beal, his self-published work during the *poesia marginal* movement "sealed [his] reputation as *the* poet of Brasília" (*The Art* 52). Behr's style has largely remained consistent over time, fusing the iconoclastic appeal of *poesia marginal* with elements of Brazilian modernism and concretism. His persona rarely strays from a first-person perspective, using informal speech patterns and wordplay to engage the reader. The remarkable concision of his poems, which rarely extend past

[98] Born to German immigrants in Cuiabá in 1958, Behr moved to the capital with his family in 1974. According to Carlos Macedo, Behr rapidly gained political and cultural consciousness once in Brasília, using poetry to question the status quo under the dictatorship. Though Behr did not publish for much of the 1980s while working for environmentalist NGOs, he returned to poetry in the early 1990s and has remained prolific ever since. His bibliography currently consists of over three dozen collections (21-30). In addition to his poetry, Behr runs a garden center and plant nursery with his wife (Beal, *The Art* 91).

a dozen verses, also contributes to his outsized popularity.[99] Though Behr addresses a range of themes in his production, Brasília and its many contradictions remain the primary focus of his work. Like Almino, the poet does not hesitate to illustrate the capital's dystopian elements yet finds that the city continues to provide an unlikely impulse towards utopian aspiration.

While Brasília is the central setting of Behr's poetry, the specific themes that interest the poet vary over time. At first focused primarily on the city's design and resultant sensation of *brasilite,* Behr later considers myriad, complex challenges complicating utopian thought in the capital including ecological deterioration, the damaging ideological function of Brasília's origin myths, and the city's anomalous temporality. Gilda Maria Queiroz Furiati proposes dividing Behr's extensive production into three periods: his initial production from 1977-1980 that centers on Brasília's spatiality, his work from the years 1993-1997 that considers social time, history, and utopia in the capital, and his work since 2001 criticizing and deconstructing the mythologization of the capital's origin story (8-9). The poet's vision of the capital is expansive, yet the city's potential remains an underlying theme. Behr's tentative evocations of hopefulness dialogue with his dire depictions of *brasiliense* reality to encourage a collective effort of using social dreaming to re-imagine a truly utopian Brasília.

The primary embodiment of this alternative version of the capital in the second and third phases of Behr's oeuvre is the imagined city of Braxília. Introduced in 1993's *Porque construí Braxília,* this fictional city is the culmination of what Filipe Manzoni calls the poet's "pluralização de alternativas de *releitura* [of Brasília]" (98). By heeding the warnings of Behr's critical dystopian representations and redoubling the real city's best attributes, the imagined

[99] As Beal describes, Behr "constitutes a unique case in Brazil (and perhaps in the world) of a twenty-first-century poet becoming a popular icon of a city" (*The Art* 90).

metropolis would avoid Brasília's failures. For the poet, this utopian doppelganger serves a source of inspiration:

> Braxília fica no reino dos sonhos, é minha Pasárgada. Todo mundo tem o direito de ter, de viajar na sua Braxília. Uma cidade de autogestão, cidade anárquica sem ser bagunçada, de gente feliz. A utopia dentro da utopia, com tudo que a gente sonha. Não haverá violência, terá melhor distribuição de renda, muitos museus, muitas escolas, muitos teatros. Será uma cidade-arte. (In Macedo 57)

Braxília exists only as a dream yet this imagined city reveals Behr's continued hopes that dystopian thinking about the real capital's flaws might forge a brighter future. If followed, the warnings of the poet's social criticism could bring Brasília closer to embodying its initial, egalitarian objectives.

In *Porque construí Braxília*, Behr outlines the essential contrast between the real and imagined cities. Braxília is Brasília's negative, a place free from the failed aspirations marking the capital's history. Commanding the reader to engage their imagination, the poet creates three compounded antonyms outlining the imagined city:

> imagine brasília
>
> não-capital
>
> não-poder
>
> não-brasília
>
> assim é braxília. (in *Laranja seleta* 77)

The reader first pictures Brasília then redefines the capital through a process of mental negation. The apparent target of the second and third verses are the capital's powerful bureaucratic elite,

long a subject of Behr's sardonic criticism. Each verse, though, also contains an alternate interpretation. Imagining Brasília free of financial capital reinforces Braxília's egalitarianism. Interpreting "poder" not as "power" but as "to be able to" implies the difficulty of such a utopian reimagining. In a final, affirmative gesture, however, Behr opts for the present tense in the poem's final verse, stating that Braxília *is* such a place and suggesting the power of utopian thought to manifest the alternative city.

Behr evokes Braxília through specific and general criticism of Brasília in *Braxília revisitada, vol. 1* (2004).[100] Without ever explicitly referencing Braxília in the included poems, Behr presents a critical dystopian outline of the pitfalls the imagined city must avoid. The poet first targets the Plano Piloto's central axis, a fundamental symbol of the intertwined strains of utopianism not embodied by Brasília. Costa's sketch of the crossing axes adorns the cover of *Braxília revistada, vol. 1,* while the collection's first poem directly interrogates their meaning: "brasília nasceu / de um gesto primário / dois eixos se cruzando, / ou seja, o próprio sinal da cruz / como quem pede benção ou perdão" (1). This aspirational urbanistic and religious form marked Brasília's future location, symbolizing the political, mystical, and social transformations to which the city's founders aspired. In the wake of the capital's failures, however, the poet interprets this shape as an appeal for forgiveness and blessing. Furiati notes that the name "Braxília" incorporates the sign of the cross, recontextualizing the symbol and reimbuing it with new, utopian aspiration: "a cidade mantém o 'X' (na letra) que representa a cruz original sobre a qual foi projetado o cruzamento dos dois eixos. Foi um modo que o poeta encontrou para – mesmo mudando um fonema – fazer permanente a essência da cidade e sua origem, e mesmo

[100] The title is a reference to Lúcio Costa's article "Brasília revisitada 1985/1987," in which the designer defends his plans for the capital and argues for the preservation of the qualities that set it apart from other Brazilian urban centers.

com a desertificação e decadência . . . talvez poder reconstruí-la futuramente" (50-51). The collection's opening poem, then, acknowledges the capital's failures while suggesting that its foundational utopianism might still inform the creation of Braxília.

Later in *Braxília revisitada, vol. 1*, Behr dissects the damaging power of unquestioned belief in these same aspirations. He ironically deconstructs the legacy of the city's figureheads including Dom Bosco, Costa, Niemeyer, and JK. The clearest rebuke of Brasília's mythologized mystical utopianism comes early in the work: "'aparecerá neste / sítio a terra prometida / donde fluirão leite e / mel'. Ô seu dom bosco, / cadê o leite? /cadê o mel? / cadê o meu pão / com manteiga?" (4). Behr succinctly contradicts the persistent rhetoric of mystical utopianism in Brasília, contrasting the florid language of Dom Bosco's dream with informal, oral speech patterns more typical of the satellite cities than the halls of Congress. Towards the end of the collection, Behr critiques the ideological function of Brasília's foundational mystical and political aspirations: "evangelho da realidade / contra jotakristo / Segundo são lúcio / naquele dia, jotakristo, / subindo aos céus num pé de / pequi, disse aos candangos: / felizes os que construíram / comigo esta cidade pois / irão todos para as satélites" (86). Reality, with the *candangos* physically segregated and economically marginalized, undermines the Christlike president's egalitarian discourse. Behr layers the poem with biting irony, such as jotakristo conflating the *candangos*' hard labor with his own role in Brasília's construction and the double meaning of promising his followers a destiny in the satellites. While conjuring images of floating among the heavenly bodies of outer space, the feminine article "as" makes clear that jotakristo's promise in the last verse in fact alludes to confinement in Brasília's periphery. Behr's disdain for JK's sanctification is blatant. His critique of the contemporary, ideological function of the city's initial utopian aspirations is more subtle yet effectively denounces the use of these myths to

justify continued apartheid of the Federal District. Braxília, as the real capital's opposite, must reclaim the right to utopian aspiration and expand the right to the city to residents of the periphery.

Alongside the collection's description of everything Braxília should *not* be, Behr includes a single poem centered on positive action. Breaking from critical dystopian representation, the poet describes a scene of resistance: "neve na esplanada / barricadas na rodoviária / a tomada da brastilha" (49). The *rodoviária*, where commuters from the satellite cities enter the Plano Piloto, sits at the meeting place of Brasília's foundational axes. The invocation of the Bastille hints that the oppressed have seized control of the bus station while implying the wider revolutionary potential of this moment. The stormed Parisian fortress was a key symbolic victory in the French Revolution, suggesting that commandeering the terminal could fulfill a similar role in the struggle against Brasília's oppressive social and political structures. In this brief but suggestive poem, Behr reiterates the need for collective action if Brasília is to approximate its utopian doppelganger.

Behr returns to directly invoking the imagined non-capital in subsequent works including *Brasilíada* (2010). This collection foregrounds temporal destabilization to facilitate a state of estrangement. For Carlos Macedo, quoted on the book's inside cover, the effect of this uncertain sense of time is that, "Os profetas silenciam, o ufanismo se desmancha. Aos poucos, a capital desmorona dentro do leitor. Em meio às ruínas, o poeta-arqueólogo junta peças da memória e do desejo para reinventar a cidade inventada..." The temporally jumbled, deconstructed depiction of Brasília and its history in *Brasilíada* challenges a wide range of preconceived notions about the capital. At the same time, Behr encourages the reader to reconstitute the collection's dissembled elements into their own Braxília.

The collection's penultimate poem most thoroughly exemplifies this challenge. Long by Behr's standards, the text proposes a series of temporally inconsistent hypotheticals that propose Braxília as embodying the successful revisitation of the capital's initial aspirations:

quando reconstruírem meu bloco
quando o eixão virar um jardim
quando os anjos retornarem à catedral
quando jk for definitivamente reabilitado
quando brasília voltar a ser patrimônio
cultural da humanidade
quando a poesia for necessária
quando se realizar a profecia
de dom bosco
quando os candangos forem bem-vindos
na cidade fortificada
quando derrubarem os tapumes da maquete
quando implodirem todos os ministérios
quando os burocratas forem expulsos
quando o massacre da geb for esclarecido
quando a catedral voltar a ser ecumênica
quando brasília se chamar braxília

quando a cidade começar a existir. (67)

Behr highlights the hypothetical nature of these changes by employing the future subjunctive verbal tense, with most verses describing unlikely scenarios. The Eixão boulevard will not be converted into a garden, the GEB massacre will probably not be painstakingly investigated, and the *candangos* (as well as contemporary satellite city residents) remain segregated outside of the Plano Piloto. The ministries remain standing, filled with the bureaucrats Behr reviles, and Dom Bosco's dream continues to justify an unequal status quo. The poet also depicts potentially beneficial changes that have not actually occurred: the superquadras where Behr lived still stand and the Plano Piloto remains preserved by UNESCO, a status which Holston names an impediment to creativity and innovation ("The Spirit" 87). The irony and dark humor of the list's more unlikely hypotheticals reveal Behr's doubtfulness about the likelihood of any major, positive changes. Still, Behr incites the reader to engage their imagination and create a similar outline of their own, utopian version of the capital.

Throughout *Brasilíada,* Behr reiterates the difficulty of imagining Braxília through familiar references to the capital's history of failed utopianism. Not all of the collection's historical references are dystopian, however, as the poet again suggests that Brasília's foundational objectives, if repurposed correctly, can facilitate Braxília's creation. In one poem, Behr evinces a surprisingly hopeful perspective on JK's legacy: "desconstruir jk / reconstruir braxília / desbrasilianizar jk / rebraxilianizar brasília / rejuscelinizar braxília / desjuscelinizar jk // reinventar a cidade inventada" (26). The alternating prefixes des- and re- emphasize the dual processes of destruction and construction, a reminder of the positive function of Behr's criticism. The second verse's call to reconstruct Braxília exemplifies the poet's shifting use of temporality by implying that the imagined city already existed. While strange at first, the rest of the poem offers an explanation: Braxília embodies the undiluted utopianism of the pre-construction

Brasília. Deconstructing JK, then, means resisting the ongoing conversion of his aspirations into myths used to rationalize Brasília's social apartheid. If properly disconnected from this pernicious legacy, Behr argues, JK might inspire renewed hopefulness based on the audacity of his utopian ambition. The former president's idolization remains part of the oppressive, dystopian reality of Brasília, but his initial association with utopianism could yet inspire a grand rethinking of the capital in the form of Braxília.

Another key theme in the collection is ecology, a long-running concern in Behr's poetry and professional life. Whereas many of Behr's earlier collections make clever references to the flora and fauna of the *cerrado*, *Brasilíada* crafts resolutely dystopian images of Brasília's relationship with its surrounding natural environment.[101] The poet's invocation of ecological dystopia finds relatively few parallels in *brasiliense* literature despite the centrality of the same theme in literary visions of São Paulo.[102] Still, Behr succinctly evokes the environmental devastation obscured by the relatively abundant green spaces of the Plano Piloto: "brasília pronta / foi então preciso construir / uma paisagem pra ela // tiraram as árvores / plantaram os edifícios // parafusaram pessoas / nas estruturas metálicas / dos ministérios // instalaram uma fábrica / de moer carne humana / na rodoviária" (38). The first three verses introduce the temporally counterintuitive concept of creating a landscape after an urban center and reveal the relative unimportance of nature for those who assumed power in the new capital. Incompatible with a city structured around economic development and modernity, the trees of the *cerrado* were

[101] One such example, from 1978's *Caroço de goiaba* is "Manchete de 2001," which playfully conjures science fictional dystopia: "OBJETOS VOADORES / NÃO IDENTIFICADOS / SOBREVOAM A CIDADE // (eram duas borboletas)" (in *Laranja seleta* 112).

[102] Two exceptions are Guimarães Rosa's "As margens da alegria," in which the destruction of the *cerrado* is a central theme, and Almino's *Cidade livre*, which includes a *candango* character symbolically linked to nature.

uprooted and replaced by buildings. The horrific images of humans screwed into ministry buildings and workers ground into meat in the *rodoviária* link environmental destruction to the exploitation of laborers since the city's foundation. The savannah, considered little more than a blank slate for Brasília to transform, has suffered continual destruction fueled by its ongoing exclusion from imaginaries of the city.

Behr again illustrates the surrounding environment as the victim of authoritarian action in a later poem. Like "brasília pronta," this text foregrounds temporal estrangement. Unlike the earlier poem, however, this work suggests the eventual destruction of the metropolis: "brasília começou do nada / nada era o nome que se dava, / na época da construção, ao cerrado // brasília terminou em nada // nada é o nome que se dá, hoje, / ao deserto de areia que cobre a capital" (41). Before Brasília, the *cerrado* was completely ignored. In the future from which Behr's persona speaks, however, Brasília is overcome by the natural absence of a vast desert. Although this juxtaposition might suggest nature's victory, the transformation of the savannah's scrubland into a sandy expanse implies deep pessimism for capital and ecosystem alike. The choice to position the persona in an unspecified future in which desertification has already occurred leaves little hope that ecological catastrophe can be avoided. While *Brasilíada* maintains a hopeful posture about the transformation of Brasília into Braxília, the collection's perspective on nature is considerably more fatalistic. Still, the consistent invocation of fluctuating temporality in line with Lispector's *crônicas* undercuts anti-utopian resignation by implicitly acknowledging the possibility of both brighter and darker futures for the capital.

Braxília remains a consistent presence in Behr's poetry since the 1990s, serving as a constant reminder of the real city's flaws and the ongoing possibility of imagining a more utopian future in the capital. Conjuring Braxília is no simple task, requiring a concerted,

collective effort on the scale of Brasília's construction. The exploitative, alienating, and often authoritarian city provides ample barriers to aspiration. Nonetheless, the promise of a renewed capital that recaptures Brasília's foundational utopianism and avoids the pitfalls of undue mythologization continues to inspire the poet. There is no guarantee that Braxília will come to fruition, yet Behr remains resolute in his desire to use critical dystopian thinking and post-utopian aspiration to bring much-delayed egalitarianism and environmental preservation to the Federal District.

Utopia Brasília: Darcy Ribeiro Keeps the Faith

Darcy Ribeiro, one of twentieth-century Brazil's best-known and most influential academics, retained close ties to Brasília and remained optimistic about the capital's future despite experiencing its flaws firsthand.[103] The author and educator first became involved with the capital in 1959 while working with Anísio Teixeira to found the UnB (Universidade de Brasília), where he served as the institution's first rector.[104] Ribeiro remained passionate about the university, memorably referring to the institution as his daughter in *Barra 68: Sem perder a*

[103] Born in Minas Gerais, Ribeiro (1922-1997) was an anthropologist, educator, novelist, and politician. While impactful in each field, he is best known for *O povo brasileiro* (1995), an anthropological study of the formation of Brazilian culture published with an accompanying documentary.

[104] When the 1964 coup d'état took place, Ribeiro had moved on to serve as Minister of Education and Chief of Staff under João Goulart. Consequently, he spent the next twelve years in exile. In the 1980s, Ribeiro reentered politics, losing several elections as a candidate for the PDT (Partido Democrático Trabalhista) party he cofounded with Leonel Brizola before his election as a Senator for Rio de Janeiro in 1990, a role he served until his death (Heymann).

ternura (2001),[105] Vladimir Carvalho's documentary about the university.[106] As Isa Grinspum Ferraz describes, Ribeiro's engagement with utopian thought linked his diverse professional interests and activities, while Luciana Quillet Heymann notes that the anthropologist referred to his various intellectual, social, and political projects as his utopias (14).[107] It is fitting, then, that one of the last fictional texts Ribeiro composed, "Ivy-marãen: a terra sem males – ano 2997" (1997), evokes a purely hopeful vision of Brazil and its capital that harkens back to the undiluted utopianism of the earliest literary depictions of Brasília.[108]

"Ivy-marãen" narrates a voyage to the titular macro-nation, which occupies South American continent, by the Scandinavian Olav and the Chinese Piing.[109] The one area Olav, the narrator, describes but does not visit during the narrative is Brasília, Ivy-marãen's capital. The city remains so ingrained in Olav's mind that he recites its history and describes its impact as an intellectual center from memory. Ribeiro does not excise the city's history of failure from this utopian portrayal, but instead proposes that, with time, the city's foundational utopian aspirations

[105] Carvalho's film remains a powerful testament to the UnB as a symbol of utopianism (particularly Ribeiro's) in Brasília while chronicling the dystopian experiences of the university's students under the military dictatorship.

[106] As Luciana Quillet Heymann details, Ribeiro strove to establish his foundation on the UnB campus during the last years of his life yet was ultimately unsuccessful.

[107] Ribeiro also titled his 1981 novel *Utopia selvagem: saudades de uma inocência perdida*. The novel narrates the fabular story of a black solider who defects during the (fictional) Guyanese War to search for Eldorado in the northern Amazon. Captured by a tribe of female, indigenous warriors, he gradually learns to appreciate indigenous culture before experiencing a sense of mystical communion under the influence of the Caapi plant.

[108] Though first published by the Senate in the book *Livro da profecia – o Brasil no Terceiro Milênio*, the citations in this dissertation come from the collection *Utopia Brasil* (2008).

[109] The nation's name comes from a Guaraní utopian myth of the land without evil, hunger, or war (J. Rocha 33-36).

(including his own efforts to establish the UnB) will come to fruition. The city's flaws comprise only two brief sentences, as Olav describes how, "Por séculos operou só para atender a burocratas poderosos . . . Na Era da Decadência, Brasília sofreu muito" (51). In the far-flung future of 2997, however, the city's residents appreciate its rational design and freedom from prior forms of urbanization: "As cidades antigas, por bonitas que sejam, surgiram por acumulação no tempo. São irracionais e absurdas" (51). A thousand years in the future, then, the peaceful, progressive historical period promised by Brasília's founders will have finally come to fruition. Brasília's population will, at last, enjoy the egalitarian utopia outlined by Costa's plan.

Ribeiro's capital likewise achieves the harmony between urbanity and nature sought by Brasília's planners. In the imagined future of "Ivy-marãen," the region feeds and powers much of the world's advanced society. Further, the city's year-round sun and extensive stretches of land occupied solely by trees have made Brasília the largest producer of renewable energy in the world. In the text's utopian future, fossil fuels no longer exist, replaced by Brasília's eternally renewable solar energy fields (51). Though the conversion of the *cerrado* into panels devalues the area's natural ecology, there is no doubt that the *brasilienses* of the text's future have defied critics who considered the Planalto Central to be a useless space in need of modernization.

The most impressive aspect of "Ivy-marãen's" Brasília is the Templo Maior. This building serves as the headquarters of Lexomundo, a system that controls and distributes human knowledge throughout the globe. Olav directly connects this futuristic center of knowledge to the UnB, even referencing Ribeiro by name:

> Tudo isso faz de Brasília a cidade do espírito e de seu Templo a Universidade do mundo, que é a forma atual da Universidade de Brasília, criada há mil anos por um certo Darcy Ribeiro e que vem, desde então, se desenvolvendo. (52)

The UnB is already a monument to Ribeiro's utopianism, if one whose legacy is also marked by repression. In the future, though, it is a global symbol of the power of education. Ribeiro, who frequently worried about his intellectual legacy in his final years, illustrates a radically optimistic vision of his life's work (Heymann). Olav describes the futuristic, virtual university as a tool of egalitarianism, "Funciona hoje como um enlace de qualquer pessoa, de qualquer parte, que queira construir-se como um sábio" (52). The UnB of "Ivy-marãen," then, projects the full extent of Ribeiro's aspirations for the university, incorporating fantastical technology connecting scholars around the globe to facilitate knowledge and social betterment.

Ribeiro's description of Brasília in "Ivy-Marãen" reveals a world where Brasília's foundational utopian aspirations have become reality. In such a society, it is only fitting that the city serves as the global capital of knowledge. Ribeiro's radical utopian hopes for Brasília, Brazil, and Latin America evoke ambitions more typical of the late 1950s and early 1960s than the late 1990s. This unexpected optimism reaffirming the city's foundational high modernist and political utopias places "Ivy-Marãen" in stark contrast with the post-utopian and pessimistic perspectives on Brasília seen in this chapter. Still, Ribeiro situates his version of the capital at a great temporal remove in a subtle acknowledgement that the real city's dystopian characteristics will long delay the consolidation of its original utopian aspirations.

Chapter One Conclusion

Brasília's legacy of utopianism is a prevalent theme among contemporary authors considering the capital. The failure of these initial aspirations informs the perspectives included in this chapter, though it does not always prevent renewed optimism tied to the ambitions of the capital's founders. In fact, each author except for Hatoum balances criticism of the city's failures

with some degree of faith in its foundational utopianism. Still, the complexity of drawing inspiration from failed ambitions of the late 1950s is reflected in the unusual temporality that defines many of the selected texts. The resultant sense of estrangement challenges simplistic conclusions, allowing ambiguous perspectives and cautious optimism to predominate.

While her portrayal of the capital is inimitable, Lispector's *crônicas* remain influential due to their evocation of a place at once defined by aspiration, frustration, and outright strangeness. Contemporary Brasília bears the hallmarks of the Brazilianization and authoritarianism the author predicted shortly after its inauguration. Nonetheless, the city's unique temporality permits subsequent writers to draw inspiration from the city's foundational strains of utopianism despite their respective failures. Almino and Behr each adopt more specifically critical perspectives on the capital's history that approximate their cautious optimism with Campos's theory of post-utopianism. Still, both authors propose Brasília's original aspirations as an unlikely font of inspiration. For Behr, only similar, radical ambitions will allow the city to follow the prescriptions of his critical dystopian analysis. For Almino, hope is never fully free of despair, making focused, cautious hopefulness the most effective response to Brasília's challenges. Revolutionary improvements remain unlikely, yet these authors share a conviction that utopian thinking might ameliorate the conditions of an alienating, segregated city.

For their part, Hatoum and Ribeiro adopt opposing perspectives on the possibility of Brasília fulfilling its initial promises. *A noite da espera* leaves no doubt as to the city's authoritarian nature and easy appropriation by repressive, violent actors. Although the fully disillusioned young Martim flees the capital, the older, exiled character remains resigned to anti-utopianism. "Ivy-marãen," on the other hand, depicts a Brasília fulfilling the wildest hopes of its creators. The city reshapes not only Brazilian society but that of the entire world in its

harmonious, enlightened image. Whereas Hatoum depicts the city's flaws as precluding hopefulness, Ribeiro views the city's contemporary failures as a small obstacle to the eventual culmination of its founders' radical aims.

This diversity of these perspectives reveals a general lack of consensus regarding the power of utopianism in contemporary Brasília, yet any conclusion remains partial due to the absence of authors based in the satellite cities. The exclusion of peripherical perspectives from the city's literary canon precludes a truly panoramic assessment of the role of utopianism in *brasiliense* literature. A product of the Federal District's ongoing segregation, the silencing of these voices obscures insight into the dystopian realities of the periphery that might contest the influence of *doxa* asserting that Brasília remains inherently utopian despite its flaws. While the included authors occasionally reference the plight of the satellite cities, their perspectives cannot reflect the experiences of those who reside in the capital's periphery. To more fully understand the role of utopian thought in literary Brasília, these texts must be further amplified and more widely disseminated.

CHAPTER TWO

Filming a Failed Utopia: Division, Disillusionment, and New Hope in Brasília's Cinema

Cinema in Brasília: A Brief Overview

Due to the recency of its construction, artists have captured the full scope of Brasília's history on film. Though the capital has never been a major hub of cinematic production, filmmakers have recorded the city's development since shortly after construction began.[110] Brasília serves as a featured location for a small number of films in comparison with São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and other regional centers of cinematic production. Still, utopia has remained a central concern of filmmakers since before the city's inauguration. For Eduardo de Jesus, the capital's legacy as a site of (failed) utopian aspiration is the defining theme of the city's cinematic history:

> Far from celebrating the seductive image compositions of the city, the way cinema has gazed at Brasília over the years has been characterized by a tension of very critical views—revealing complex political and social contexts—and also celebratory views of the great utopia that characterized the city and its construction. (47)

This dynamic, which parallels literary depictions of the capital, allows for similarly divergent portraits of the city's utopian potential. A brief summary of major moments in the city's cinematic history will further contextualize the recent works selected for analysis in this chapter.

Brasília was first depicted onscreen in acclamatory documentaries that mirrored the perspective of the city's founders. Alongside newsreels financed by NOVACAP, the French-

[110] The capital has hosted the country's longest-running festival of Brazilian film since 1965, an event that quickly established the city as an important *locus* for filmmakers, critics, and cinephiles (Beal, *The Art*, 47).

born photojournalist Jean Manzon's laudatory short "Primeiras imagens de Brasília" (1957) established the initial visual imaginary of the city (Jesus 47). For Jesus, Manzon's documentary pairing images of construction with narration and triumphant instrumentation "was, in fact, ideological propaganda about the construction of the city to appease the critics of that time" (56). Subsequent documentaries centered on the young city's reality, on the other hand, balanced admiration with criticism. Nelson Pereira dos Santos's "Fala, Brasília" (1966), and Joaquim Pedro de Andrade's "Brasília: contradições de uma cidade nova" (1967) highlight the city's entrancing aesthetics while revealing the challenging reality of the *candangos*.[111] Andrade's film, which employs a bipartite structure foregrounding the capital's stunning architecture before revealing the city's impoverished, segregated periphery, has proved especially influential.[112]

The capital has since played a major role in Silvio Tendler's historical documentaries[113] about the first presidents to govern from the Palácio da Alvorada and the often sharply critical production of longtime Brasília resident Vladimir Carvalho.[114] Carvalho's oeuvre has repeatedly

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[111] According to Ricardo Daehn, Carlos Diegues's "Brasília" (1960) comprises another skeptical portrait of the capital by a figure associated with Cinema Novo, though all copies of this film have been lost.

[112] As Gustavo Procópio Furtado notes, Andrade's film undermines its critical engagement through its conformity with what Jean-Claude Bernardet (who co-wrote the film with Andrade and Luís Saia) calls the sociological mode of documentary filmmaking. Andrade subtly elevates the official perspective on the city above that of the interviewed Northeastern migrants by incorporating the former via voice-over (accompanied by an orchestral score) and the latter through direct sound (119).

[113] These films are *Os anos JK: uma trajetória política* (1980) and *Jango* (1984). José Mario Ortiz and Arthur Autran note that both works were received warmly by the Brazilian public during the dictatorship (247). The director later returned to the subject of JK with 2002's *JK – o menino que sonhou um país*.

[114] Carvalho, originally from Paraíba, moved to Brasília in 1970 to work at the UnB (Beal, *The Art* 59).

given voice to those marginalized by the state during and after Brasília's construction, as exemplified by "Brasília segundo Feldman" (1979),[115] *Barra 68: sem perder a ternura* (2001), and his masterpiece *Conterrâneos velhos de guerra* (1991).[116] In *Conterrâneos,* Carvalho intertwines archival imagery and original footage to highlight the capital's stark socioeconomic divisions. The GEB massacre plays a major role in the film as the director highlights official hypocrisy and indifference towards the city's working class as he directly questions figures of authority (including Costa and Niemeyer) about the incident. Carvalho's choice to interview subjects from impoverished slums alongside representatives of the halls of power reveals that the city's profound failures have not extinguished a surprisingly vibrant popular culture rooted in the Brazilian Northeast.

Fictional films centered on Brasília likewise balance appreciation for the city with criticism of its social inequality. Some features, like Philippe de Broca's French spy thriller *L'homme de Rio* (1964), incorporate the city's landmarks with little interest in its divisions.[117] Many subsequent films, however, adopt a critical posture towards the city's flaws. Carlos Diegues's *Bye Bye Brasil* (1979), which Beal names "the most famous filmic depiction of Brasília," concludes in a disappointing, divided capital that nonetheless offers opportunities to migrants unavailable elsewhere in the country (46). Subsequent works like Tizuka Yamasaki's *Patriamada* (1985), Lúcia Murat's *Doces poderes* (1996), Nelson Pereira dos Santos's *Brasília*

[115] "Brasília Segundo Feldman" combines 16mm footage taken by the American artist Eugene Feldman during a 1959 visit to the under-construction capital with recordings of Brazilian artist Athos Bulcão and the farmer Luiz Perseghini, whose memories include the GEB massacre.

[116] Though less explicitly critical, the director's documentary *Rock Brasília: era de ouro* (2011) is a compelling chronicle of the city's influential 1980s rock music scene.

[117] For more on *L'homme de Rio,* see Sadlier's *Brazil Imagined* (200-204).

18% (2005), and Fernando Meirelles's television miniseries *Felizes para sempre?* (2015) criticize different aspects of politics in the capital. Other works like Glauber Rocha's *A idade da terra* (1980), Zuleica Porto and Sérgio Bazi's "Brasiliários" (1986), Nelson Pereira dos Santos's *A terceira margem do rio* (1994), Ana Vaz's "Sacris Pulso" (2008) and "A idade da pedra" (2013), and Felipe Hirsch and Daniela Thomas's *Insolação* (2009) employ allegory and poetic language to consider themes including hope and alienation. Other twenty-first century features centered in the Plano Piloto like José Eduardo Belmonte's *A concepção* (2005) and Iberê Carvalho's *O último cine drive-in* (2015), utilize realist aesthetics to consider existential questions, identity, and affect alongside social concerns.[118]

Peripherical cinematic production in the Federal District has remained rare. To date, only two filmmakers based in the satellite cities have achieved any level of critical recognition. The firefighter and director Afonso Brazza produced seven low-budget films in Gama from 1975 to 2001. Brazza, known as "Rambo of the *Cerrado*," drew inspiration from American action films and westerns yet never secured distribution beyond the Federal District (Beal, *The Art* 115). The director's best-known work, *Inferno no Gama* (1993), embodies what Ricardo Daehn denotes as the artist's popular appeal and embrace of extremely low budget, "trash" aesthetics. In the twenty-first century, Ceilândia-based Adirley Queirós has achieved a national profile among cinephiles and competed in international film festivals. This satellite city is a central presence in the director's documentary, fictional, and hybrid production. Although Queirós consistently eschews generic convention, his more recent films incorporate explicitly dystopian narrative elements.

[118] Both films would be interesting subject matter for an expanded version of this study.

The films included in this chapter interrogate Brasília's origins as a utopian project and the ramifications of its failed, foundational aspirations in the contemporary city. While united by awareness of the city's flaws, these works diverge with respect to their engagement with the capital's specific political and social history. Hopefulness for the city's future likewise varies widely, though most of the included production references significant disillusionment. The perception of unusual temporality in the Federal District crucial to literary depictions of the capital likewise resonates in the selected cinematic texts. Evoked through narrative elements, editing choices, and mise-en-scène, this wavering sense of time challenges straightforward interpretation of the role of utopian thought in each work.

The first film considered is Glauber Rocha's exuberant and ambiguous final film, *A idade da terra* (1980), which depicts Brasília as possessing contradictory yet undeniable utopian potential. Ana Vaz's short films "Sacris pulso" (2008) and "A idade da pedra" (2013) reference Rocha's work and Clarice Lispector's literature while questioning the legacy of Brasília's foundational utopianism. Daniela Thomas and Felipe Hirsch's *Insolação* (2009) highlights widespread alienation in the high modernist city that undercuts interpersonal affection and social dreaming alike. The rest of the chapter analyzes Adirley Queirós's three feature-length films: *A cidade é uma só?* (2011), *Branco sai, preto fica* (2014), and *Era uma vez Brasília* (2017). Each film juxtaposes characters' aspirations with sharp criticism of social apartheid, setting the stage for the director's considerations of concepts including disillusionment, critical dystopia, and radical utopianism.

A New Dawn in Glauber Rocha's Brasília

The final film of one of Brazil's greatest directors, Glauber Rocha's *A idade da terra* (1980) incorporates Brasília and the *cerrado*'s aesthetic beauty and symbolic resonance to consider the possibility of national liberation from neocolonialism.[119] Devoid of linear narrative, the film instead prioritizes allegory, poetic dialogue, and visual juxtaposition. Brasília is not the work's exclusive location, as *A idade da terra*'s sixteen sequences take place across Brazil's three historical capitals. The film comprises an extremely loose adaptation of the New Testament as four Christs (Indigenous, Black, Military, and Guerrilla) share an antagonist: the Satanic, American capitalist John Brahms (Maurício del Valle). The encounters between these figures mirror the film's larger aesthetic of fragmentation while offering minimal resolution. The representation of Brasília in the film is likewise complex yet consistently foregrounds the concept of utopia. By juxtaposing radical utopianism drawn from the capital's foundational aspirations and post-utopian optimism wary of the city's flaws, Rocha suggests a hopeful future for Brasília as the capital of a liberated Brazil. At the same time, however, the director conjures a sense of estranged temporality that implies the tentative nature of this conclusion.

A idade da terra exemplifies the aesthetic proposed by Rocha's 1971 text *Ezteytika do sonho*, as the film's non-linear composition and prioritization of symbolic language evoke the sensation of dreaming. Rocha's essay moves away from the director's better-known theory of embracing underdevelopment outlined in *Estética da fome* (1965), instead arguing that

[119] Born in Bahia, Glauber Rocha (1939-1981) first gained recognition during the Cinema Novo movement of the 1960s. Rocha's early films portray the struggle for liberation of Brazil's oppressed, while his later work generally adopts a more international focus. After returning from self-imposed exile in 1977, Rocha filmed *A idade da terra*, his final feature length project in Brazil. Though he spent the final year of his life in Portugal, he died in Rio de Janeiro from sepsis related to a lung infection at the age of 42.

traditional cinematic language is a product of colonial domination rooted in the concept of reason. It is imperative, the director writes, that Third World artists give shape to a new, trancelike aesthetic based on the right to dream, "o único direito que não se pode proibir," and communicate genuinely revolutionary, irrational perspectives (3). Intentionally challenging, this oneiric aesthetic confronts the biases of a viewer steeped in cinematic convention. As Alexei Bueno argues, the spectator must instead approach the film as a cinematic mural in the vein of Rivera, Orozco, or Siqueiros (97). At the same time, as Anita Leandro explains, the film's incorporation of Eisensteinian editing conveys meaning through the dialectical juxtaposition of visual symbols (11). The soundtrack mirrors this technique in its inclusion of Afro-Brazilian rhythms, orchestral pieces, yelled dialogue, and extended narration by Rocha. While a strikingly chaotic experience, the film rewards the viewer's concentration through its aesthetic inventiveness and critique of a temporally estranged Brazil poised between a new, utopian era and an impending apocalypse.

The influence of *Ezteytica do sonho* obscures the film's depiction of utopianism, yet *A idade da terra* ultimately parallels a key dynamic identified by Ismail Xavier in his reading of Rocha's *Deus e o diabo na terra do sol* (1964). For the critic, this film's allegory at once portrays teleological, universal salvation rooted in Marxism while critiquing the presuppositions and contradictions of such belief (143).[120] A similar coexistence of didacticism and critical self-reflection recurs in the director's depiction of Brasília, though critics diverge significantly when

[120] The film's final scene exemplifies this dynamic in its depiction of the central characters running towards the sea (previously established as a paradisiacal symbol) yet excluding their arrival in favor of a cut to a travelling shot of waves (Xavier 140-141).

considering the implications of such a dynamic in a film devoid of linear narrative.[121] On the one hand, Teresa Ventura argues that the film's atemporality precludes any utopian horizon: "A descrença em relação ao paraíso futuro desloca a tentação messiânica, fragmenta o tempo, condenando-o ao eterno retorno do instante no qual o real se eterniza" (382). On the other, Ivana Bentes identifies a utopian impulse behind the film's apocalyptic imagery and dialogue: "Glauber parece querer provocar um apocalipse estético, de onde surgiria uma novidade política radical" (52-53). *A idade da terra*'s provocative ambiguity facilitates conflicting readings, yet analysis of scenes centered on the capital and Black Christ (Antônio Pitanga) reveals a baseline of hopefulness. The film's Brasília evokes critical post-utopianism paralleling that of João Almino's novels in a shifting equilibrium with unfettered hopefulness closer to that of Darcy Riberiro's "Ivy-marãen."

A idade da terra's opening take is a four-minute leftward pan of the sun rising over the hills west of the Palácio da Alvorada and Lake Paranoá (0:00:00-0:04:02). The morning calm conveyed by the camera's creeping movement clashes with a chaotic combination of non-diegetic rhythms and chants. The fusion of the arid *cerrado* and the gleaming waters of Brasília's artificial lake at the end of this trajectory creates an immediate visual reference to the utopian inversion of "*mar*" and "*sertão*" prophesized throughout *Deus e o diabo.* Quezia Brandão and Wagner Pinheiro Pereira interpret *A idade da terra*'s opening shot as illustrating the dawn of a new historical epoch: "As ilustrações da Descoberta da América apresentam imagem semelhante: o horizonte virgem da América com o nascer do Sol. O simbolismo dessa iconografia é latente – o nascer de um novo mundo, de uma nova Era, de uma nova história e

[121] Lúcia Nagib highlights anti-utopianism in her reading of Rocha's *Terra em transe* (1967), which combines allegory of Brazilian politics before and after the 1964 coup d'état with a self-critique of the country's left (*A utopia no cinema* 39-44).

civilização" (50). Still, the presence of Niemeyer's architecture definitively identifies the setting as Brasília. This shot, then, immediately provokes consideration of the capital's capacity to belatedly establish the social, political, and historical tabula rasa sought by the city's founders.

Fig. 1. Dawn breaks over the Palácio da Alvorada (0:00:10).

The first sequence set in Brasília provides a point of contrast by describing the real city's flaws. As the section begins, the camera zooms into the Palácio da Alvorada from the same position it captured the opening sunrise (0:26:05-0:26:30). Instead of increasing illumination, however, the screen gradually darkens. This artificial sunset leads into an interview between Black Christ and journalist Carlos Castelo Branco, who discusses the history of the military dictatorship at length (0:26:30-0:36:45). Although the scene is entirely interior, the establishing shot and Black Christ's presence suggest its location in Brasília. This association reminds the

viewer of the authoritarian political reality that rapidly overtook the city's foundational aspirations, providing a counterbalance to the initial, hopeful depiction of the capital. Although Black Christ will later declare considerable optimism about the city's future, Castelo Branco's testimony emphasizes the need to remain critical about the often-dystopian reality of Brasília in the 1970s also seen in *A noite da espera*. Without undermining the possibility of radical change, the sequence cautions against utopian thought detached from historical context.

As the interview with Castelo Branco concludes, Brahms arrives in the capital. Despite displaying characteristic bravado, the industrialist's apparent weakness in Brasília implies Rocha's optimism about the city and its future. Brahms and Black Christ then deliver competing speeches alongside the under-construction pyramid of the Teatro Nacional that reveal the power and challenge of utopian thought in the capital. First, the American proclaims that, "Aqui há duzentos anos que meus escravos estão construindo essa pirâmide, que no futuro será meu túmulo!," reminding the viewer that the authoritarian practices undergirding Brasília's construction harken to a centuries-long tradition of violence and domination in Brazil (0:39-0:39:20). The camera then scans a wall of advertisements covering the exterior of the Conjunto Nacional shopping mall and returns to the side of the Teatro Nacional while Black Christ screams: "Brahms, chegou a hora de você ouvir a voz do Terceiro Mundo! Você representa a pirâmide. Nós somos os prisioneiros desta pirâmide. Eu, meus irmãos nós os escravos. . . . A humanidade caminha para a terceira guerra mundial. O mundo será destruído pela bomba atômica!" (0:40:55-0:41:35). Black Christ's denunciation of neocolonialism appears to further weaken Brahms, illuminating the power of hopeful, critical thinking in *A idade da terra*'s Brasília. Despite collapsing on the Esplanada dos Ministérios, however, Brahms vows to return

to the capital in a final recognition that the city's future remains unresolved despite the impending end of the military dictatorship (0:44:45-0:46:30).

Fig. 2. Brahms speaks to workers constructing the Teatro Nacional (0:41:08).

Details from subsequent scenes in the capital featuring Black Christ at once harken back to the film's initial image of transformative rebirth and reaffirm the need for post-utopianism to prevent continued exploitation in the capital. One such sequence intercuts Pitanga's Christ healing groups of followers in the *cerrado* with the same character preaching atop Brasília's television tower with the Plano Piloto framed in the background (1:18:05-1:24:40). On the one hand, this editing implies the vast reach of his anti-imperialist teachings and his outsized influence on the capital. On the other, the chaotic mise-en-scène of the healing sequences challenge straightforward allegorical interpretation by compiling an eccentric mixture of

religious, historical, and cultural symbols. For Alexandre Rocha da Silva and André Corrêa de Silva de Araújo, this sequence "instaura uma espécie de falta de sentido, de non-sense: não se consegue compreender em uma perspectiva clássica o que faz um faraó egípcio lado a lado com um pai-de-santo em frente ao Palácio do Planalto" (70). Each of the symbols seen in the sequence contains some measure of allegorical resonance, but their simultaneous juxtaposition makes immediate interpretation impossible.[122] The scene connotes a sense of unbridled hopefulness yet its aesthetic exuberance serves as a reminder of the importance of engaged criticism. Without such analysis, Brasília's legacy of grand ambition will remain purely symbolic instead of inspiring post-utopian thinking about potential social reforms.

Fig. 3. Black Christ in Brasília's Torre de Televisão (1:19:25).

[122] The Pharaoh, for instance, likely references the (pre-)urban legend that JK was the reincarnation of the builder pharaoh Akhenaton noted by Paskine Sagnes and Laurent Viala (367).

Later, Black Christ appears dressed in African garb prancing through tall grass alongside a female, Afro-Brazilian character (1:47:30-1:50:10). As the pair circulate, Congress and the Palácio do Planalto Presidential office appear in the background. The traditional *capoeira* song "Aidê" plays while the character proclaims: "Chegamos, chegamos. Chegamos à terra da promissão. Chegamos. Aqui construiremos uma nova nação. Aqui construiremos uma nova nação." The scene's eurhythmic, non-diegetic sound stands in contrast with the film's typical auditory chaos, seemingly affirming the Black Christ's optimism. The sequence's allegory remains unified around the theme of Afro-Brazilian aspiration, suggesting Brasília could yet be a locus of racial equity. While *A idade da terra* acknowledges the capital's flaws, this scene presents another instance of exuberant hopefulness centered on an alternative Brasília that embraces rather than negates Brazilian culture.

Black Christ's final appearance frames the character against the *cerrado*. A non-diegetic samba about Getúlio Vargas plays before Rocha's own voice begins a passage of narration that explains Brasília's importance as a symbol of utopianism:

> Aqui, por exemplo, em Brasília, este palco fantástico no coração do planalto brasileiro, fonte, irradiação, luz do Terceiro Mundo, uma metáfora que não se realiza na História mas preenche um sentimento de grandeza: A visão do paraíso. . . . Tudo isso, no teatro, pois sim, a cidade e a selva, Brasília é o El Dorado, aquilo que os espanhóis ou outros visionários perseguiam... (2:06:00-2:10:30)

As this narration fades out, the director's diegetic voice can be heard directing the actors in a nod to his direct influence on the film's imagery and dialogue. Like Lispector and Almino, Rocha pairs acknowledgement of Brasília's failures with continued belief that the city's foundational

aims can incite future social dreaming.[123] More than either author, however, the filmmaker suggests that post-utopian, incremental aspiration exists as part of a continuum with the radically utopian hope he connotes through visual symbols, dialogue, and narration.

Rocha's use of unstable temporality undergirds the film's tenuous balance between radical optimism and cautious hope. The Palácio da Alvorada appears before a mystical dawn and during a rapid fade to darkness. Black Christ repeatedly predicts the end of the world yet his appearances as a nude Adam figure and a tribal African harken back to the humanity's origins (1:26:30-1:30:00). The director plainly states his belief in Brasília as a symbol of hope in narration, yet he repeatedly pairs the concept of a utopian horizon with that of apocalyptic destruction. The inclusion of Castelo Branco's political analysis and Black Christ's speeches about imperialism implies that post-utopian critique might offer a resolution to this impasse, yet the film offers little proof of its efficacy. *A idade da terra* conveys Rocha's optimism that Brasília can yet serve as an engine of social change, but the film's parallel juxtapositions intentionally call any teleological certainty into question. The capital's existence continues to inspire belief in a utopian future for Brazil. For now, however, the ideal method for realizing this goal remains uncertain.

[123] In a 1978 essay for *Revista Civilização Brasileira* Rocha describes the capital in even more utopian terms:

> ...com sua construção, o Brasil pode se livrar do seu complexo diante do colonialismo. O despertar político e a consciência do subdesenvolvimento datam da construção de Brasília. Isto é bastante contraditório porque Brasília era uma espécie de Eldorado, a possibilidade que os brasileiros tinham de criar eles mesmos alguma coisa." (in Ventura 382-383)

Seeking Brasília in Ana Vaz's Intertextual Cinema

The striking architecture of the Plano Piloto featured in *A idade da terra* remains largely absent from the films of director Ana Vaz.[124] Despite this point of divergence, Rocha's influence on the younger filmmaker is undeniable. Beyond naming her 2013 film "A idade da pedra," Vaz authored a laudatory essay about *A idade da terra* for the catalogue of the Tate Modern's *Tropicália and Beyond: Dialogues in Brazilian Film History* program in 2017. The *brasiliense* Vaz has made her hometown the subject of two short films to date. "Sacris pulso" (2008) comprises the director's own archival footage and images from the 1986 short film "Brasiliários" (Zuleica Porto and Sérgio Bazi), during whose production her parents met.[125] "A idade da pedra" combines original footage shot in nearby Goiás with computer-generated imagery that indirectly evokes the Plano Piloto. The former film establishes intertextual dialogue with "Brasiliários" and Lispector's "Brasília," while the latter film quotes the same *crônica* and implicitly references *A idade da terra*. Both films recognize the symbolic potency of the capital yet reveal considerable skepticism about drawing new inspiration from a city defined by failed utopian aspiration.

The Brasília of "Sacris pulso" is at once atemporal, as established by the recitation of Lispector's *crônicas,* and directly tied to Vaz's life. Much footage comes from "Brasiliários," yet other images include home video shot by the director's parents, her own recordings, and archival footage of farmers shearing a sheep. The film's collage aesthetic, compounded by the frequent

[124] Vaz (1986-) was born and raised in Brasília but has spent her adult life in Australia, France, and Portugal. She has directed eight short films to date, some of which have been showcased at prestigious festivals including NYFF, TIFF, and Cinema du Réel. Vaz's films foreground poetic language and explore themes including colonialism, modernism, and utopia.

[125] The director's mother, Cláudia Pereira, portrays Lispector. Her father, Guilherme Vaz, composed the droning, mysterious score. The elder Vaz also soundtracks "Sacris Pulso" while Pereira recorded additional narration.

superimposition of images, further conjures a sense of temporal flux. The inclusion of scenes from Porto and Bazi's film in reverse motion underscores the theme of revisiting the past as Vaz considers her own childhood, the Brasília of 1986 captured in "Brasiliários," and Lispector's depiction of the capital from 1962. Just as the farmers shear through wool, Vaz cuts through time to consider the repercussions of having been raised in a city defined by unsuccessful aspirations for a political and historical tabula rasa.

Vaz juxtaposes Lispector's critique of the capital's bizarre nature with segments reflecting her own affective ties to the city. The film considers the place of the individual in a city where (as Lispector describes) space and time are intertwined, the streets are infinite, and the future has already happened. "Sacris Pulso" provides no easy answer, instead depicting a looping, fragmented, and dreamlike journey to Brasília's past. The film's citations of "Brasília" and frequently grainy archival footage conjure a sense of unease yet acknowledge the city's continued ability to inspire imagination. The viewer repeatedly hears the director's whispered prayers while Lispector (Cláudia Pereira) states, "Reconheço esta cidade no mais fundo do meu sonho," suggesting the city's ultimate intangibility (0:10:43). The failed aspirations of Brasília's founders echo across Lispector's literature, Porto and Bazi's film, and "Sacris pulso."

Fig. 4. Clarice Lispector (in an image originally from "Brasiliários") superimposed over the Esplanada dos Ministérios (0:02:20).

Brasília's tendency to isolate its residents also resonates in Vaz's film. The director combines repeated images of solitary figures in Brasília (especially Pereira's Lispector) with a description of her own isolation in Australia and images shot from an airplane (0:05:05-0:06:45). Across the Pacific, Vaz retraces her own memories and her family's history of solitude in the capital. The traveling shots highlighting Brasília's scale identify high modernist utopianism as a major source of estrangement, yet the director avoids exaggeratedly dystopian imagery.[126] Instead, Vaz conjures alienation through a disjointed soundtrack, inconsistent film gauge, and the use of filters and altered tonalities. The juxtaposition of forward and reverse motion, including a

[126] In fact, Vaz chooses not to include the most overtly dystopian image from "Brasiliários," the cracked concrete exterior of the Teatro Nacional covered in weeds.

shot of a woman readying herself to open a red curtain before rewinding to her starting point, ties this sense of solitude to an inability to meaningfully change (0:01:30-0:01:40). The film's retroactive focus combines with these signifiers of isolation to imply the capital's limited ability to inspire renewed utopianism.

Although stagnation is a major theme of "Sacris pulso," Vaz also acknowledges Brasília's humanity through the film's intertextual portrait of three generations of artists considering the capital's unique nature. While the same quirks and flaws inform her own production, that of Lispector, and "Brasiliários," Vaz productively incorporates the depiction of strangeness in the earlier works. For Oana Chivouiu, the film's portrait of spatial and temporal displacement is "an aesthetic practice that is committed to producing new venues of representation and thinking about subjectivity and time." "Sacris pulso" establishes an intertextual dialogue that at once redoubles this critique and draws attention to the city's role as a quotidian space for of its residents. These dual aspects do not exist in equilibrium, however, as Brasília's bizarre nature serves as an aesthetic filter through which Vaz includes her childhood memories alongside intertextual elements and disconnected, archival footage. The resultant sensation of alienation and distorted memory reveals how the capital's legacy of failed utopianism continues to challenge the critique of past and present central to post-utopian thinking.

In an interview with Guilherme Carréra, Vaz describes "Sacris pulso" as the first installment of a "Trilogy of Utopias" (357). The final film of this triad, "A idade da pedra," returns to the theme of Brasília while foregoing footage of the capital.[127] Instead of capturing the

[127] The second film in this group is "Entre temps" (2013), which focuses on the demolition of a modernist public housing complex in France. The themes of modernist utopian structures connect the three films despite this geographical displacement.

Plano Piloto, Vaz conjures the city through intertextual reference and juxtaposition between the *cerrado* and a mysterious, modernist structure looming above the natural landscape. All the while, Vaz's camera luxuriates in the natural beauty of the savannah and the stark geometry of the Pirenópolis quarry where the structure appears. This massive, unexplained construction creates an obvious visual parallel to Niemeyer's architecture (though sculptor Anne-Charlotte Yves's design prefers right angles to the architect's flowing curves), expanding the film's incongruous coexistence of urban symbolism and rural imagery. While the film remains mysterious, Vaz's attention to detail evokes the limits of Brasília's promised utopianism and the failings of the constructed capital.

"A idade da pedra" departs from the collage aesthetic of "Sacris pulso," though the two works share interest in estrangement, temporal instability, and uncertainty. The latter film relies on slow camera motion (both zooms and pans), preferring extended takes to the rapid cuts and retarded frame rates of the its predecessor. The soundtrack incorporates natural (though not always diegetic) sounds and eschews narration, though Ivonete (Ivonete dos Santos Moraes) reads one of Lispector's sentences directly to the camera (0:24:10-0:24:20). A lone *afoxé* sounds during the film's conclusion, accompanying a final pan from the base of the quarry to the sky that forces the viewer to question the existence of the stone monument.[128] For Raquel Schefer, "A idade da pedra" defies realism and approaches an oneiric aesthetic despite its reliance on direct observation: "[the film] aponta para a possibilidade de que a estética 'realista' deixe de ser percebida em função da adequação da representação à realidade para ser concebida em termos de separação, variação e interpretação do 'real.'" This artificiality, reinforced by Ivonete's quotation

[128] An *afoxé* is an instrument constructed by wrapping a net threaded with beads around a dried gourd. The musician shakes the instrument to create percussion.

of Lispector, provokes further consideration of Brasília's geographical and sociological influence on the Planalto Central. Vaz's critique of the capital remains elliptical, yet "A idade da pedra" effectively interrogates the reach of the capital's foundational utopianism and its consequences for the area's residents.

Vaz opens her film with a four-minute long take of a sunrise over the *cerrado* that immediately conjures images of Brasília for viewers familiar with *A idade da terra* (0:00:00-0:04:20). Despite this initial allusion, however, the film never depicts the capital. Subsequent takes showcase the flora, fauna, and geology of the Planalto Central in alternating close-ups and extreme wide shots. The cinematography dwells on the natural textures of the region's rock formations, slowly tracking their undulations through camera movement. This interest in geology connects the initial shots to the quarry that serves as the primary location for the film's the second half. Whereas the surrounding mountains and canyons are defined by the flowing grooves of natural erosion, the quartzite rocks extracted by laborers are sharply angled. Among the extensive, largely untouched landscapes of central Brazil, the quarry stands apart as a heterotopia marked by the influence of man.

Fig. 5. Sunrise over the *cerrado* (0:04:00).

The squared beams of the massive, modernist sculpture rising from the quarry mirror the shapes of the quartzite. Still, the structure's monumentality indicates it is either a ruin from an ancient human civilization like Lispector's *brasiliários* or the result of futuristic technology. Vaz provides no answers, defining the film's temporality as remarkably indistinct. Carréra terms "A idade da pedra" uchronic, stating: "The monument itself plays with uncertainty: we never know if it is a ruin from ancient times or a visionary image of the future" (358, 364). While the mysterious structure's location in a rare site of human activity suggests its creation by man, the film's indistinct temporality challenges decisive interpretation of the object's connection to technological progress. What is apparent, however, is the bizarre juxtaposition of the looming edifice and the manual labor undertaken in the quarry. The idea of futurity conjured by the

object, like utopian visions of Brasília, remains disconnected from the material reality of the *cerrado*.

The structure's disappearance extends the film's temporal confusion while hinting at social critique. Despite previously appearing unaware of the modernist monument, various quarrymen perceive its presence as the film concludes. Three sequential shot-reverse shots show 1) the structure at the quarry's rim and a laborer looking slightly upward, 2) the structure and another worker in profile gazing upward, and 3) the structure and a wide shot of five workers surveying the rim (0:24:40-0:26:00). A final cut leads to the extended upward pan revealing that the sculpture has disappeared (0:26:00-0:26:30). This wordless sequence conveys a divide between the laborers and the futuristic monument, suggesting their exclusion from whatever powerful, technologically adept society may have constructed the edifice. Like the *candangos* and subsequent generations of peripherical *brasilienses* who built and sustain Brasília yet remain confined to satellite cities, the quarrymen maintain an existence almost entirely separate from the signifiers of progress, modernity, and egalitarianism concentrated in the Plano Piloto. The mysterious structure of "A idade da pedra" might portend an impending utopian society, yet its rapid disappearance from the quarry underscores the limited impact of futuristic aesthetics for working-class residents of Brasília, the Federal District, and the Planalto Central.

Fig. 6. The mysterious structure viewed from within the quarry (0:24:45).

Vaz's approach to the capital in "A idade da pedra" is far less personal than that of "Sacris pulso." Instead, the director alludes to Brasília's historical, social, and geographical impact (or lack thereof). Connecting both films, though, is an essential instability and unknowability related to the Federal District. Brasília remains simultaneously present and absent in the director's memories and in the Pirenópolis quarry. The city failed in its initial aspirations for egalitarianism and national progress while instituting a powerful and lasting sense of unease among residents and visitors alike. Vaz, like Lispector and Rocha before her, attempts to negotiate these echoes of failed aspiration. While the city remains an object of fascination, neither film points toward any utopian horizon. Despite moments of subtle critique, Vaz fails to identify any possibility of future integration that would counteract the alienation she so skillfully conjures.

Cold Comfort: Alienation and Anonymity in *Insolação* (2009)

Daniela Thomas and Felipe Hirsch shot *Insolação* (2009) in and around the Plano Piloto yet chose to exclude Brasília's postcard imagery.[129] Instead, the directors create an anonymous visual landscape that reflects the isolation and ennui of the film's ensemble cast. Brasília's monumental scale and harsh sunlight (emphasized by the film's color grading) amplify the intersecting trajectories of loss and unrequited love of the film's diegesis. As Letícia Colnago describes, this presentation of the city emphasizes the connection between urbanism and emotion: "Although the film is set in real locations, the almost total absence of life . . . combined with feelings of sterility accentuated by the bare materials common to Modern architecture, acts to intensify feelings of emotional detachment and displacement, turning this postcard city into an ascetic non-place" (118). The city's wide horizons, often a symbol of hope in Almino's novels, join its urbanistic voids to reflect the various characters' struggles for interpersonal connection and self-understanding. In fact, the *brasilienses* of *Insolação* remain almost entirely blind to the possibility of original utopian aspiration. Thomas and Hirsch craft a bleak portrait of alienated individuals in a Brasília whose foundational high modernist utopianism has backfired. The film's conclusion hints at cause for tentative hope, yet disillusionment and resignation predominate.

[129] Daniela Thomas (1959-) is a São Paulo-based playwright and director of multiple impactful films since the cinematic *retomada*. She worked alongside Walter Salles in her first three features, the transatlantic melodrama *Terra estrangeira* (1995), the diptych *O primeiro dia* (1999), and the São Paulo-set social drama *Linha de passe* (2008). In addition to *Insolação*, Thomas served as the only director for the historical drama *Vazante* (2017) and the political drama *O Banquete* (2018), set in the first years after redemocratization ("Daniela Thomas"). Felipe Hirsch (1972-) is best known as a dramaturg, with his productions renowned for their aesthetic innovation since the 1990s. He established a fruitful partnership with Thomas beginning in 2001, a collaboration that eventually led to his début in the cinema with *Insolação* ("Felipe Hirsch"). Since this film's release, Hirsch has directed his first solo feature, the psychological drama *Severina* (2017).

Thomas and Hirsch immediately suggest the location of Brasília via a take framing Andrei (Paulo José) on a rooftop gazing at the *cerrado* (0:02:00-0:02:00). The filmmakers cut from this wide shot to a monologue delivered directly to the camera by the same character in a disused modernist building: “Os pássaros cantam e o sol esconde o frio da nossa bela cidade. Mas eu não estou aqui para falar sobre a cidade, eu estou aqui para falar sobre o amor” (0:02:00-0:04:00). While the film’s primary interest is indeed emotion, this statement is misleading within the wider context of *Insolação*. In fact, the city’s design and unique history inform the film to the point Douglas Bento Bezerra argues Brasília should be considered a character (1009). While Andrei concludes his opening speech by indicating love is motivation enough to continue living, the film’s depiction of disaffected, isolated characters leaves little reason to believe that interpersonal connection can overcome the barriers concretized in the capital’s design.

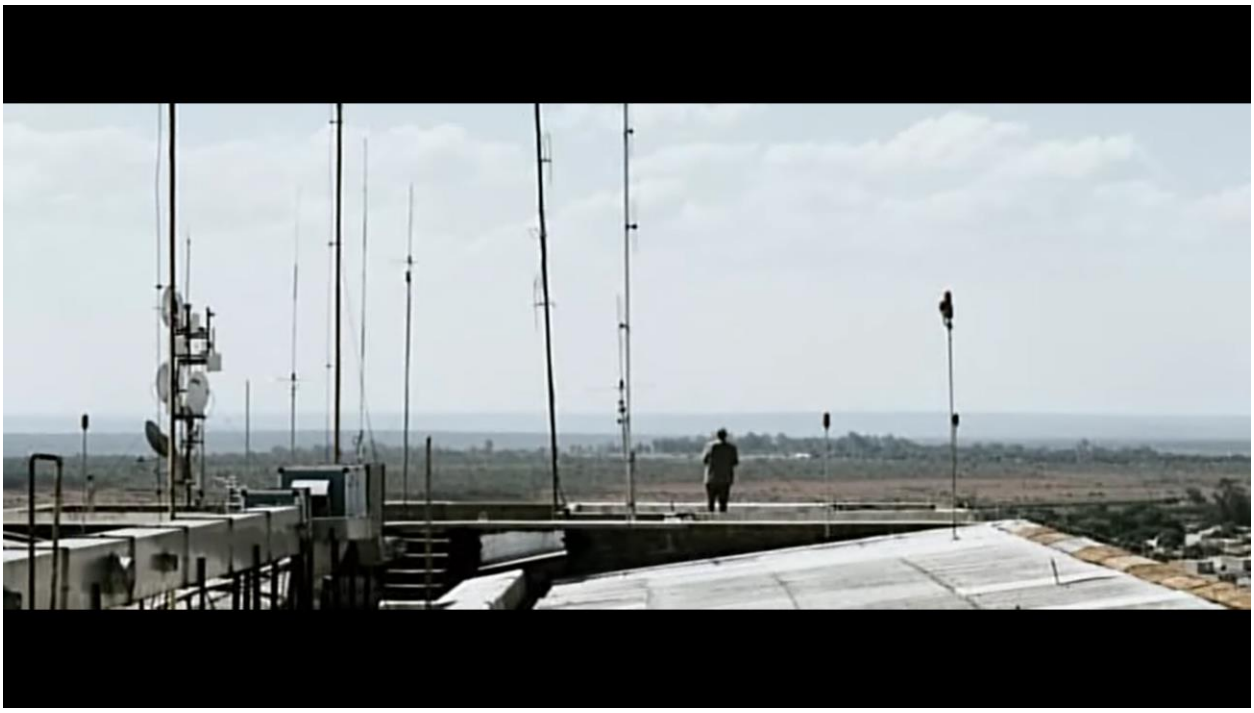

Fig. 7. Andrei looks at the horizon (0:01:40).

While never explicitly designated as taking place in Brasília, the prominence of high modernist architecture and urbanism in *Insolação* leaves little doubt as to the film's setting. With their light coloring amplified by the film's color grading, the Federal District's stylistically distinctive structures draw the eye whether presented in establishing shots, scenes featuring characters, or mise-en-scène on the blackboard of Eduardo Tornaghi's unnamed architect (14:20-0:14:45). In addition to contributing to the film's considerable visual style, these buildings create a point of connection between the characters' arcs and the failure of high modernist utopianism in the capital. As seen in *Insolação*, alienation remains a major repercussion of the city's attempt to reshape Brazilian society. The film only obliquely references issues of class or labor, with most of the film's characters firmly situated in the bourgeois milieu also preferred by Almino in most of his novels. Still, Thomas and Hirsch focus on characters suffering from interpersonal disorientation in the intentionally defamiliarized city nearly fifty years after its inauguration. Even as many of the high modernist structures featured have fallen into disuse, society has failed to recoalesce in the film's Brasília.

The most obvious examples of miscommunication occur during the multiples scenes set at the run-down kiosk where the principal characters occasionally assemble. In his four scenes in this location, Andrei repeatedly orders coffee despite the server's continual insistence that none is available.[130] The final time the character orders this drink, he does so while the barista is not even present. He then carries on a one-sided conversation with the André Frateschi's unnamed security guard without realizing the other man has died from an earlier stabbing (1:32:30-1:33:00). This scene serves as the culmination of the recurrent inability to properly listen

[130] This recurring lack of coffee is likely an implicit reference to Lispector's "Brasília," which includes the line: "Também não tem botequim para a gente tomar um cafezinho" (71).

affecting each of the film's characters. To name just two examples, Estela (Leandra Leal) repeats herself while mentioning that Vladimir (Antônio Medeiros) seems too young to be a doctor while Ana (Maria Luísa Mendonça) asks Léo (Leonardo Medeiros) if he is married and continues to request details about his wife even after he responds that he is single (0:22:00-0:22:30). This citywide lack of sociability initially imbues the film with an unexpected air of playfulness, yet the characters' respective denouements reveal the tragic nature of this phenomenon. While some individuals do establish tentative new relationships during the narrative, the film's final, extended shot of the abandoned kiosk underscores the dissolution of the central group's tenuous bonds (1:34:00-1:34:30).

Fig. 8. The kiosk where the characters gather (0:05:10).

The Cathedral of Brasília becomes, through its absence, a symbol of the connection between high modernism and social alienation. In conversation with Léo, Ana inquires what people like to do in the city. Despite little supporting evidence, the architect answers that people enjoy walking around and visiting the Cathedral. Later, Ana interview's Léo's boss, who remains silent when asked to speak about the city. After ending her futile interview, the journalist asks, "Onde é que fica a Catedral? É difícil de encontrar?," to which the architect replies that Léo can take her (0:27:00-0:30:00). While Thomas and Hirsch return to Ana and Léo spending time together during the same night, they never mention having visited the Cathedral. In fact, this Niemeyer-designed site of worship never appears in *Insolação*. The absence of this high modernist monument despite its repeated invocation suggests the ongoing resonance of the capital's initial failures. The defamiliarization inherent in Costa's plan has come to fruition. The turn towards egalitarianism, on the other hand, never occurred. As a result, Brasília's residents remain socially atomized and physically isolated, unable to form lasting connections or engage in collective social dreaming.

The character most closely identified with the modernist structures depicted in the film is the young nymphomaniac Lúcia (Simone Spoladore). A young woman who does, in fact, spend extended periods of time as a pedestrian, Lúcia appears at various points in a disused modernist edifice surrounded by shallow pools, an empty *superquadra*, the subterranean passages under the Eixo Rodoviária, and lying alone in a massive parking lot. Though the character mentions wanting a passport in the film's early moments, she later reveals she does not possess a birth certificate. Devoid of the sense of identity this document represents, Lúcia embraces sex as an ineffective salve for her alienation. In one scene, the camera observes the young woman and a lover in bed from an askew, overhead angle. Lúcia remains silent while her partner asks, "O que

há é de errado comigo. O que que eu fiz ontem? Deve ser algum tipo de insolação" (0:40:00-0:40:20). This lone reference to the film's title intertwines Lúcia's isolation, exaggerated by the camera's unusual position, with a collective inability to remember likely resulting from Brasília's failed pursuit of a social and urbanistic tabula rasa. The same man continues, describing having fallen in love. Lúcia merely listens without a hint of acknowledgement as Thomas and Hirsch underscore her continued emotional disconnect exaggerated by the capital's design.

Later, the same character finds herself at the kiosk with Andrei. Lúcia mentions having slept with five men in two days before the older man delivers a monologue invoking both apocalypse and renewed hope: "Parece que foi ontem a última noite da última noite. E hoje é a noite da noite da última noite, de novo. O que virá depois da última noite da última noite. A primeira manhã da primeira manhã. Eu espero, eu espero" (1:00:00-1:01:00). Shortly thereafter, however, the directors undercut any belief in love's redeeming power. Lúcia walks alone down a wide avenue in a rare nighttime scene. The camera cuts to an extreme close-up of the character's face, leaving a small crowd and unexplained glowing orb out of focus (1:03:00-1:04:00). Léo's non-diegetic voice enters the soundtrack. While the emotional strings of Arthur de Faria's original score sound, he recounts a story of failed utopianism:

> …essa festa acontece todos os anos. Há muitos anos. Na verdade, ela começou por causa de uma história. Essas pessoas queriam começar uma cidade nova, só que pra chegar até aqui, elas tinham que atravessar o deserto. Mas elas nunca chegaram aqui, elas se perderam. E, quanto mais elas tentavam encontrar o caminho para fora do deserto, mais elas se enfiavam nele. Aí, finalmente, elas não tinham mais pra onde ir e também não

tinham como voltar. Então eles decidiram transformar a lenta, inevitável morte numa grande festa no meio do deserto, para celebrar a jornada até aqui. (1:04:00-1:05:00)

The next shot reveals Léo embracing Ana, who comments that, "Essa história é a história de um outro lugar" (1:04:00-1:05:05). Indeed, only the first portion of his story rings true. The film's Brasília represents a quest for a new, improved city that never came close to fruition. Instead of celebrating their fate, however, the contemporary *brasilienses* of *Insolação* persevere as alienated, disconnected individuals in a city whose scale and design discourages interpersonal interaction. For Bezerra, Brasília exists as a ruin, "o resultado de uma tentativa frustrada de "superar" o deserto. . . . nunca se conseguiu realizar a utopia de uma cidade viva" (1014). Lúcia, devoid of identity since birth, traverses the artificial, outsized city seeking little more than the momentary pleasure of sex. Her purgatorial, lonely existence represents the unintended effects of high modernist design devoid of the dream of egalitarianism.

The conclusion of Lúcia's arc is, unexpectedly, among the film's most hopeful. After an ambiguous scene where her therapist affirms her belief in finding love, however unlikely, she shares a warm hello with a young child in a local park (1:17:00-1:19:00, 1:30:00-1:31:30). This suggestion of openness to new, platonic interpersonal bonds implies the character's ability to analyze her prior alienation and imagine a better future for herself. Her arc joins the new understanding between Vladimir and his father in suggesting that all is not lost in the capital despite its tendency to foment misunderstandings. At the same time, however, Thomas and Hirsch underscore the frequency of totalizing despair resulting from social isolation in the film's other arcs.

The watchman's senseless murder in the kiosk, Léo's (likely failed) suicide attempt, and Estela's impending death from illness all confirm the unlikelihood of achieving lasting

interpersonal ties in the contemporary city. In the final scene, the self-styled prophet of redemptive love Andrei can only stare into the camera with tears of despair in his eyes (1:33:00-1:34:00). Contrary to the character's earlier hopes, the estrangement imposed by Brasília's design remains an often-insurmountable obstacle to utopianism. A degree of redemption remains possible, yet the impact of post-utopian critique and aspiration remains limited. The social ties formed in the film's final act may yet form the base of a more integrated society, but widespread change remains difficult to foresee. Andrei may have once predicted a new dawn in Brasília, but most of *Insolação*'s alienated characters remain blinded to any utopian horizon by the city's frigid sunlight.

Filming the Anti-Brasília in *A cidade é uma só?* (2011)

For Adirley Queirós and his collaborators at CEINCINE, the Ceilândia-based collaborative he co-founded, Brasília's foundational utopianism is less a source of inspiration and more an ideological tool used to maintain apartheid.[131] Fittingly, the director rarely includes the Plano Piloto in his work. When this central region does appear, it is a locus of disorientation, exploitation, and authoritarianism for Queirós's peripherical characters. As expressed in an interview with Amanda Seraphico, the filmmaker perceives Ceilândia's physical remove from Brasília proper as intertwined with a social and psychological divide:

[131] Adirley Queirós (1970-) moved to Ceilândia as a toddler, played professional soccer in Brazil's lower divisions until 25. and worked as a receptionist in a public hospital until enrolling in the UnB's communications program. As an undergraduate, he directed an award-winning short film, *Rap: O Canto da Ceilândia* (2005), about the community's hip-hop performers. After two other short films, the fictional *Dias de greve* and documentary *Fora de Quadro* (both 2009), Queirós directed the feature-length projects analyzed in this chapter.

> [Ceilândia] está fora de Brasília e ao mesmo tempo ela é uma espécie de espelho inverso de Brasília. . . . Existe uma linha imaginária muito forte. Ultrapassar a cidade de Brasília não é uma passagem física só, de demarcação territorial, é uma passagem simbólica. E isso eu acho que é muito pesado até hoje.

Ceilândia is a direct result of a desire to showcase Brasília's unearned status as an egalitarian utopia. By evicting squatters from the Plano Piloto, the dictatorship maintained the Plano Piloto's postcard imagery at the expense of the city's poor. Queirós investigates this history in the documentary portion of his first feature, *A cidade é uma só?* (2011), before adopting a more fantastical approach to critique the ongoing divisions and authoritarianism that separate the satellite cities from the center in *Branco sai, preto fica* (2014) and *Era uma vez Brasília* (2017).

Though they vary aesthetically, Queirós's films share a commitment to hybridity. His first two features intertwine documentary and fictional storylines and aesthetics, extrapolating possible responses to historical instances of state violence in Ceilândia. *Branco sai* and *Era uma vez* both include science fictional elements that create a sense of temporal displacement and exaggerate dynamics of exploitation and violence in the outlying Federal District. As Queirós describes in an interview with Olavo Barros, the director's turn towards science-fictional aesthetics results from viewing the Plano Piloto from the periphery:

> Eu acho que a distopia faz parte da minha experiência. Eu nunca elaborei um pensamento para fazer filmes distópicos, mas a forma da minha experiência ser abordada talvez seja distópica. E a distopia tem muito a ver com Brasília também. . . . A geografia de Brasília também é distópica, porque é uma cidade muito nova. E no olho dessa modernidade dos prédios, da especulação imobiliária, rapidamente as coisas se destroem e se misturam.

The failure of Brasília's foundational aims, reflected in Ceilândia's segregation and the privatization of the city center, creates a sense of injustice ingrained in the Federal District's geography. Queirós's embrace of science fiction only throws these existing problems into relief.

In his début, Queirós defies generic convention without incorporating fantastical elements. Divided between Ceilândia's foundation and the present, *A cidade é uma só?* showcases four decades of segregation, injustice, and exploitation in the capital. While the film's downbeat ending suggests little possibility of radical change, Queirós's use of music provides a subtle yet evocative counterpoint. Large-scale social realignment is unlikely in an institutionally divided city averse to criticizing its own history, yet the director successfully communicates belief in the power of song (and, implicitly, filmmaking) to amplify and disseminate marginalized viewpoints. The director illustrates how *ceilandenses* can claim the creative right to the city, voicing their desires for greater justice despite official insistence that Brasília has already fulfilled its initial aspirations.

The documentary portion of *A cidade é uma só?* tracks local singer Nancy's efforts to find an archival recording of a jingle, "A cidade é uma só," that she sang as part of a CEI propaganda campaign during her childhood.[132] The CEI used the tune to foment support for the destruction of the Vila IAPI squatter settlement that would be resettled in Ceilândia. Though she never finds the recording, Nancy directs a new version with *ceilandense* schoolgirls that Queirós initially presents as the original, archival footage. The film's fictional storyline, occasionally blended into Nancy's arc, follows the janitor and grassroots political candidate Dildu (Dilmar Duraes). A second fictional character, Zé Bigode (Wellington Abreu), is a real estate speculator

[132] CEI stands for Campanha de Erradicação de Invasões, the government initiative created to relocate squatters from the Plano Piloto in the new satellite city. Ceilândia's name comes from the project's acronym.

in Ceilândia and Dildu's brother-in-law. Though Dildu's quixotic campaign seems to gather momentum from its hip-hop campaign jingle, the film ends with the candidate realizing the impossibility of his dream while crossing paths with a massive caravan for the PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores) (1:13:45-1:15:30).

Fig. 9. Dildu confronts the PT caravan (1:14:45).

Both the nonfictional and fictional storylines highlight how a confluence of spatial and ideological factors curtail the utopian aspirations of Ceilândia's residents. The film opens with a partial map of the Plano Piloto's initial design. Superimposed over what appears to be a stained, beige rug, the map's lines appear is if drawn by an invisible hand. Once completed, though, fire engulfs the blueprint in a symbol of this plan's failure (0:00:30-0:00:45). The film's use of music likewise makes explicit reference to spatial divisions in the Federal District. Nancy's song

"Planos" describes how exile to Ceilândia has frustrated the artist's personal and professional aspirations: Eu tinha plano de morar no Plano, de estudar no Plano / Era meu plano trabalhar no Plano, de viver no Plano / Ô meu grande mano vê que ledo engano / . . . Jogaram meus planos na periferia (0:5:25-0:06:45). The various interviews with Nancy, filmed in a traditional, documentary style, give historical context to the song's lament. As she describes, the military dictatorship created Ceilândia to avoid visiting dignitaries having to see the eyesore Vila IAPI on their descent into the capital's airport (0:09:00-0:10:30). Implicit in this statement is the shantytown's visual contradiction of the official propaganda projecting Brasília as the capital of a new, modern historical era in Brazil.

The film's fictional storyline likewise foregrounds the idea of apartheid. Dildu's campaign promises reparations for those uprooted by the CEI and public housing in the Northeastern Plano Piloto, yet his daily commute and disorientation in the Plano Piloto neatly illustrate the prevailing labor and spatial dynamics of the Federal District. Zé Bigode is equally unfamiliar with the city center. Queirós returns to the two brothers-in-law struggling to exit the Plano Piloto by car due to a shared inability to properly interpret the city's unique system of street names. Zé proffers a humorous interpretation of the city's design, "O cara tinha síndrome de tatu: cavou um monte de buraco aqui," to which Dildu responds, "Ele deve ter feito uma casa em riba de um pau e ficou lá..." (0:28:20-0:29:00). While silly, the dialogue conjures the underlying authoritarianism of supposedly egalitarian high modernist design by imagining Costa in an elevated position above the labyrinthine city surface.[133]

[133] Another important relationship between center and periphery becomes visible in Zé Bigode's storyline as he considers both regions through the lens of real estate speculation. Zé Bigode describes the Plano Piloto as priceless, while his own journey for lots takes him to the unpaved roads and substandard buildings that populate the outskirts of the satellite cities. He jokes about dividing part of the Esplanada dos Ministérios into lots for sale but spends the majority of the

The archival material incorporated into the film illuminates the ideological scaffolding sustaining the Federal District's ongoing segregation. During the film's title card, a radio recording of Niemeyer plays: "Aí está Brasília, tantos anos passados. A cidade que JK construiu com tanto entusiasmo. Uma cidade que vive como uma grande metrópole" (0:02:20-0:02:30). As this audio reaches its conclusion, the camera cuts to a dirt road in Ceilândia filmed from inside a car. The camera bobs as the vehicle traverses the rough terrain; pedestrians walk in the darkening street, illuminated only by the car's headlights (0:02:30-0:03:20).[134] The contrast between the description of a great metropolis and the impoverished condition of Ceilândia is blatant. The modernity sought by JK and the city's founders has not reached the periphery five decades after inauguration.

Archival images used to support Nancy's testimony further reveal the hypocrisy behind Ceilândia's creation. First, Queirós includes an ad produced by the Federal District government in 1972 (0:04:00-0:04:30). In this official, audiovisual depiction, Brasília is synonymous with the Plano Piloto, itself an embodiment of Brazilian progress. Low-angle images of the capital's high modernist architecture suggest the structures' awe-inspiring impact. The propaganda acknowledges the capital's Northeastern cultural influence in the form of Inezita Barroso's *sertanejo* song "Pezinho," yet the male narrator's baritone drowns out the singer as flag-bearing soldiers in plumed hats march in front of Congress. The narrator's words are welcoming, reflecting an acritical perspective on military rule befitting the short film's production: "Ano 72, décimo-segundo de Brasília, cento e cinquenta da independência. Brasília, síntese da

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film in his car driving to the far-flung reaches of the Federal District in pursuit of affordable land.

[134] The same scene also includes a recording of JK's grand predictions for the city.

nacionalidade, espera por você." Ceilândia's creation only two years prior, however, is conveniently absent. The archival film's ideological purpose is clear: presenting the capital as having fulfilled its foundational utopian aspirations. Just as there is no place for the poor in the Plano Piloto, there is no place for the satellite cities in this official cinematic projection of Brasília.[135]

Despite the entrenched ideological and spatial obstacles to positive change in the *A cidade é uma só?,* Queirós proposes filmmaking and music as effective means of communicating utopian messaging rooted in Brasília's periphery. The film, like the music it includes, counteracts official narratives that distort understanding of Ceilândia's history and contemporary reality. An important facet of this project is the resignification of key symbols including the "X" featured prominently throughout the film. As previously mentioned, the symbol of the cross in Brasília remains closely tied to the capital's original political and religious utopian aspirations. As Nancy's interviews reveal, however, the same mark carries a very different meaning for the residents of Ceilândia as the CEI marked houses for demolition in Vila IAPI by painting an "X" on their doors. The same painted symbol likewise appears in the film's title card and in an archival newspaper ad purchased by CEI that the singer encounters (0:20:20). Though Nancy remembers considering the "X" mysterious at the time, the mark's meaning is now crystalline: Vila IAPI had to be destroyed to reaffirm the capital's image as the embodiment of a progressive future.

[135] Queirós employs a similar technique of juxtaposing archival propaganda with contemporary reality using audio from Manzon's "Primeiras imagens de Brasília" and a news report detailing the necessary destruction of the unhygienic Vila IAPI (0:11:20-0:11:40, 0:07:30-0:09:00).

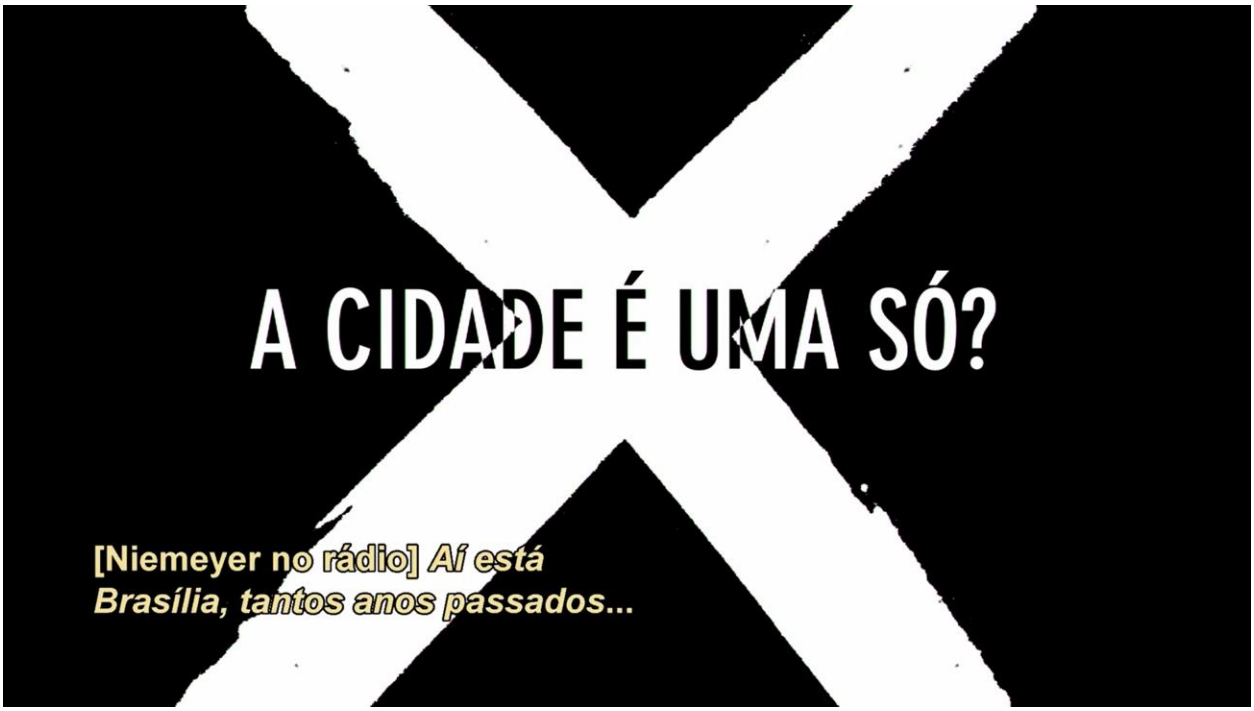

Fig. 10. The "X" symbol on the film's title card (0:02:25).

While Nancy explains the symbol's power, Dildu strives to convert "X" into a symbol of marginalized utopianism. The candidate uses the mark as the primary logo of his campaign, creating an additional association with marking a ballot. Dildu also links the symbol to his drive for reparations in a campaign speech delivered to Ceilândia residents:

> A ideia do 'X' é que a gente ressignificou tudo que já rolou de ruim no passado. A gente pega a nossa história e vê como é isso pra nós, o que significou o 'X.' Por exemplo, meu pai tipo ficou grilado com a coisa no barraco aí tipo saiu pra ver que barulho era aquele: 'Que diabo de 'x' é esse?'. (0:58:20-0:59:20)

The scene draws the viewer's attention due to the surprising length of the full monologue and, particularly, the camera's radial movement around the candidate ending with a rare, over-the-shoulder shot that reveals the listeners' interest. The film crew's visibility and the use of non-

actors in the scene further illustrates the message's impact. Despite the quixotic nature of Dildu's campaign, Queirós's efforts to uncover the harmful connotations of the "X" and recast it as a symbol of aspiration ultimately find a receptive, if limited, audience.

Music proves an effective conduit for utopianism in *A cidade é uma só?* due to its capacity to reveal and counteract the erasure of Ceilândia's history. Nancy's recreation of "A cidade é uma só" in the absence of an archival copy represents an example of musical resignification. As Gustavo Furtado describes: "The reenactment of the jingle, as a performance involving real social actors, moreover, represents an attempt to re-embody and transmit memories in the present" (126). Nancy and Queirós use their musical and filmmaking skills, respectively, to fill this harmful, intentional lacuna in the city's memory. The recreation of the choral performance repurposes propaganda as a critical dystopian reminder of the state's hypocrisy and violence in the lead-up to Ceilândia's creation.

The film's fictional storyline highlights hip-hop music's capacity to affirm alternative, hopeful perspectives rooted in the satellite city. The importance of this genre is a unique among contemporary Afro-Brazilian communties, as Hannah Serrat de S. Santos affirms: "No Brasil, o *rap* caracteriza-se enquanto potência da população negra e periférica que não encontra muitos meios de fazer ressoar suas vozes e possíveis reivindicações . . . Concentra-se aí um trabalho inventivo muito forte" (8). In *A cidade é uma só?*, Marquim's (Marquim da Tropa) rap quickly delineates a baseline of local pride. Accompanied by Zé Bigode's beatboxing and Dildu's rhythmic chest tapping, the character sings the following: "Passeou na Ceilândia, é / Aí eu moro na Ceilândia, uma quebrada de 'responsa' / Se você quer conferir vem aqui curtir a lombra / Eu vou te falar: não existe nada igual / Ceilândia é tão grande que é notícia em jornal..." (0:3:25-0:04:00). Although depictions of the satellite city in the press most often perpetuate stereotypes,

as revealed by the archival material subsequently included the film, Marquim's lyrics foreground local pride and affirm that Ceilândia is not defined by its relative poverty nor its distance from the Plano Piloto.

The same rapper fuses peripherical music and antiestablishment politics while producing Dildu's campaign jingle: "Vamos votar, votar legal! / Dildu 77223 pra distrital! / [Gunshot, gunshot]" (0:35:00-36:45, 0:38:40-0:41:00). Marquim's aim of making a song at once political and "gângster" mirrors Dildu's attempt to change the Federal District's government from the inside.[136] Still, as Furtado argues, the prominent role of gunshots in the track's final version subliminally hint at the possibility of violent rebellion: "The gunshots work both to establish Dildu's belonging to a marginalized community and as a subtle threat of violence lodged in an irreverent but non-violent performance of political campaigning . . . Yet, depending on who is listening, the gunshots can also function as a marginalized subject's threat of violence" (128). The campaign jingle, though designed as part of a nonviolent, post-utopian attempt at reform, alludes to the possibility of revolutionary action further explored in Queirós's next features. The song's political messaging, however, is only one aspect of its power.

Introduced just before the film's halfway point, the jingle plays frequently throughout the rest of *A cidade é uma só?*. In the final fifteen minutes, Zé Bigode and Dildu attach a loudspeaker to Zé's car and play the song on repeat, moving haltingly through the streets of Ceilândia (1:03:30-1:13:30). Even Dildu's encounter with the PT campaign does not silence the jingle as it returns during the final credits (1:18:30-1:19:40). This extended repetition serves to fixate the track and its message in the viewer's memory even after the film concludes. Guilherme

[136] As he consults with Marquim, Dildu repeats "5 da Norte" while ad-libbing possible lyrics. This reference to Queirós's production company creates another linkage between the film's music and the director's filmmaking process (0:35:45-0:36:00).

Martins considers the jingle the key to understanding Queirós's wider political project, calling *A cidade é uma so?*:

> …uma espécie de ritmo político-cinematográfico empreendido para operar, em nós, a remoção fisiológica e definitiva do jingle da década de 1970, convidando-nos a acompanhar, pele colada à pele, a produção de um novo jingle muito mais potente, que se infiltra em nossa escuta e expulsa com batidas graves afro-diaspóricas o jingle oficial, colaborando para a descolonização da memória de uma cidade. (41)

The disappointing denouement of Dildu's campaign, then, does not annul the film's endorsement of hip-hop as a medium capable of combatting the oppressive ideology that facilitated Ceilândia's creation.

In a final moment of synthesis, the "X" appears in the film's soundtrack during the final seconds of the ending credits as Dildu improvises during an extended version of his campaign jingle.[137] Dildu's lines contrast with the dominant pessimism of the final act and exhort the viewer to remain hopeful: "É 'X' em cima, 'X' que não sai, não pode parar, hein! . . . Vacila não! Vacila não! Bota fé." This optimism in the face of continuing, structural problems undermines the anti-utopian interpretation of the film's final moments put forth by Taiguara Belo de Oliveira and Daniele Edite Ferreira Macial:

> O afastamento em relação ao último sopro de esperança suscitado pela era Lula já estava claramente presente em *A cidade é uma só?,* em que a mirrada e quixotesca campanha do fictício "Partido da Correria Nacional" é contrastada, na última sequência, precisamente

[137] Pictured at the same time is the phrase,"Ceilândia/DF, Janeiro de 2012: Os barracos verticalizados sobem sobre concretos de especulação imobiliária: O entorno nos espera." This pessimistic message reaffirming the Federal District's spatial divisions remains on screen for nearly thirty seconds.

> com um comício da candidatura de Dilma Rousseff e sua exuberante máquina eleitoral, que tomava as ruas de Brasília. (24-25)

The introduction of the resignified "X" in the soundtrack counteracts a fatalistic reading of the film's conclusion, recasting the final moments as ambiguous rather than hopeless. The material barriers to enacting change remain formidable, yet Dildu and Marquim's jingle and Nancy's restaging of "A cidade é uma só" suggest that song, in concert with cinema, can effectively disseminate utopian aspiration rooted in Brasília's periphery.

The Right to a City in Ruins: Radical Utopian Destruction in *Branco Sai, Preto Fica* (2014)

In *Branco sai, preto fica* (2014), Queirós returns to the themes of spatiality, state-sponsored violence, and music as a medium for utopian thought. The director again blends documentary and fictional aesthetics while incorporating science fictional generic elements for the first time. The film's totalitarian surveillance state at first appears to be a textbook exaggeration of the existent injustices already seen in *A cidade é uma só?*. Ultimately, however, *Branco sai* adopts a more expansive social vision touching on issues like the right to the city, neoliberal capitalism, decolonization, and pan-Africanism.[138] The film's denouement recontextualizes this multilayered, critical dystopian vision of reality. As a bomb filled with peripherical music and sounds destroys the Plano Piloto, Queirós gestures toward a radically utopian, alternative future free of the material inequality and ideological subterfuge represented

[138] In a joint interview with Queirós, producer (and, later, assistant diretor of *Era uma vez Brasília*) Maurílio Martins describes Ceilândia's architecture as a key element in the filmmakers' vision of a dystopian Ceilândia to Alfredo Suppia and Paula Gomes: "O gradeamento da Ceilândia, que é algo único, essa arquitetura da Ceilândia, as casas todas frontais, todas na beira da rua, todas com grades... Nada pode ser mais distópico que isso!" (411).

by the high modernist city. While the destructive nature of this act might suggest a nihilistic perspective, *Branco sai* in fact illustrates firm belief in the power of the Federal District's marginalized population to overcome oppression.

Unlike the evocative, existential approach to time in Brasília seen in *Insolação* and Vaz's short films, *Branco sai*'s multitemporal narrative prioritizes social critique by challenging the viewer to take a fresh look at the Federal District's spatial, racial, and power dynamics. Queirós and his collaborators first conceived *Branco sai* as a documentary exploring a specific, traumatic event: the police shooting at the Quarentão, a club known for "black music," on March 5th, 1986. Storming the dancefloor, officers screamed the film's title before shooting indiscriminately at the remaining, black partygoers. In *Branco sai*'s estranged present, Marquim (Marquim do Tropa) and Sartana (Cláudio Irineu Shokito) each struggle with psychological trauma and physical disability in the wake of this real shooting.[139] While the film eventually incorporates traditional, camera-facing interviews of both men, the viewer comes to understand this history through a rap/reenactment performed by Marquim and voiceover recordings that accompany each man's wanderings through the desolate satellite city. The purely fictional storyline centers on Dimas Cravalanças (Dilmar Duraes), a time travelling "outsourced agent" contracted by the Brazilian government in 2070. Cravalanças struggles for roughly three years to complete his mission of gathering evidence about the Quarentão shooting so that victims' families can receive reparations. While he finally obtains sufficient archival material, he chooses to forsake his future

[139] Marquim did, in fact, lose mobility in his legs as a result of police arms fire at the Quarentão,yet Tatiana Hora Alves de Lima notes that Shokito's leg was amputated after a botched surgery, an extra-cinematic fact that further complicates *Branco sai*'s relationship with truth (12).

society and assist Marquim and Sartana with their bomb plot. The film concludes with Sartana's pencil drawings of the Plano Piloto exploding and its (white) inhabitants fleeing for their lives.

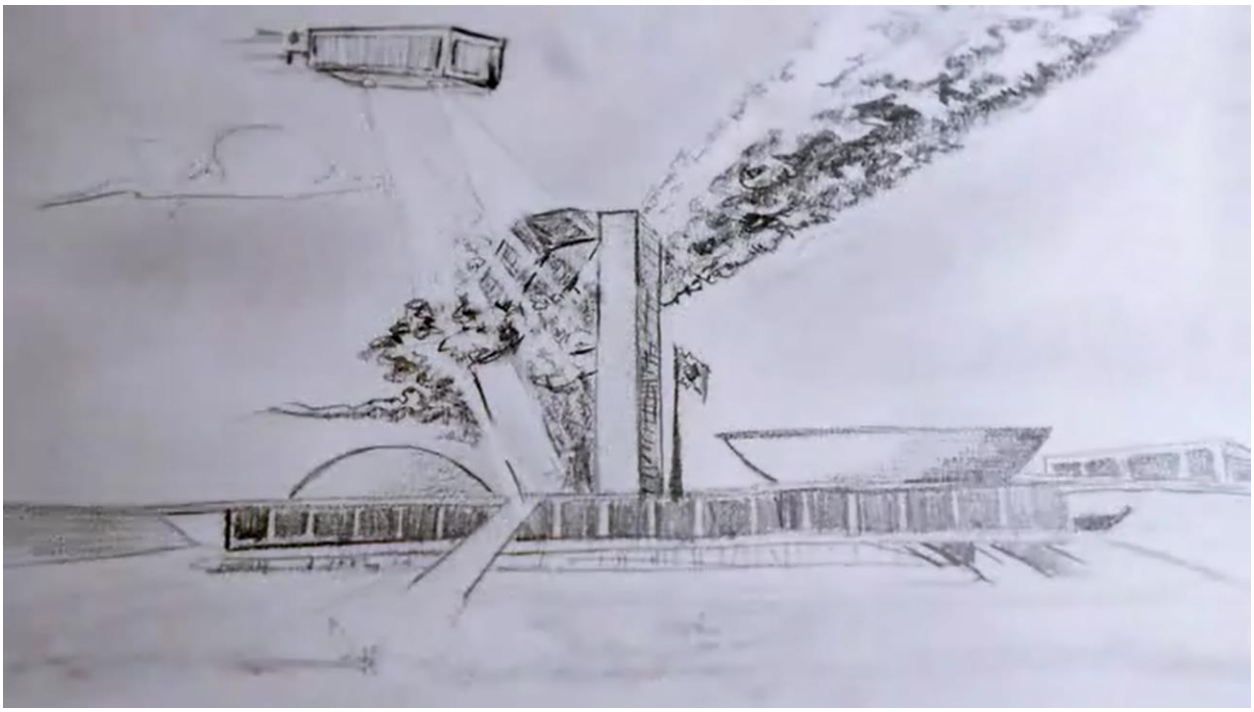

Fig. 11. Congress destroyed (1:31:45).

While *Branco sai*'s diegesis is undoubtedly provocative, the depth of Queirós's consideration of utopian thought and action becomes apparent through the film's imaginative mise-en-scène and well-crafted dialogue. The film's critique of spatiality, for instance, centers on the actors' physicality, their testimony, and the strikingly carceral architecture of the film's Ceilândia. While the Plano Piloto is entirely absent save the climactic drawings, Marquim and Sartana's bodies reflect Brasília's violent segregation. To Alfredo Suppia and Paula Gomes, "os corpos mutilados em *Branco sai, preto fica* são ele próprios 'cartografias' da violência ou 'mapas' da interdição, 'geografias' alteradas pelo uso da força do estado" (392). The actors'

respective disabilities silently testify to the history of police violence in Ceilândia. Queirós effectively highlights their struggle for mobility through long takes centered on their slow movement (most notably an extended scene observing Marquim exiting his car), while recurring shots of the characters behind vertical, metal bars visually link their plight with the larger issue of incarceration for black and marginalized Brazilians (0:32:30-0:34:10).

Fig. 12. Marquim exits his car (0:33:15).

Through narration, Sartana makes explicit the connection between these images of immobility and the characters' social disconnect: "A cidade toda era parte da minha vida. Parece que cortou aquele ali todo de mim . . . Não tinha mais direito de estar naquele esquina [onde dançava com amigos] (0:21:30-0:21:50)." The violence inscribed on the men's bodies furthers their segregation and deprives them of their right to the city. Queirós illustrates this extreme

isolation by withholding the first inter-character interaction until forty-five minutes into *Branco sai* when Jamaika (DJ Jamaika) visits Marquim and agrees to help him execute his plan (0:45:30-0:48:15). The film's science fictional elements further exaggerate the characters' limitations by introducing the "Polícia do Bem-Estar Social" that announce citywide curfews in Ceilândia and control access to the Plano Piloto with a passport system. While exaggerated, this unseen police presence clearly reflects the authoritarian tendencies underpinning the Quarentão massacre.

The process of reclaiming the right to the city is neither simple nor victimless. The marginalized characters must convert their limitations into advantages and, as Harvey asserts, embrace violence ("The Right" 9). Queirós ties the first part of this process to the idea of the body in an interview with Ela Bittencourt, claiming, "A cidade se molda em relação ao seu corpo. As pessoas acham o contrário, que o corpo se molda em relação a cidade. Eu acho que é o contrário, você que vai transformar a cidade!" This counterintuitive appropriation of immobility and confinement becomes apparent when Sartana enlists a hacker to "take control" of his prosthesis. Marquim, for his part, uses his invisibility as a disabled person living a largely subterranean existence to avoid detection while formulating and executing the plan (1:03:00-1:06:00). Similarly symbolic is the group's choice of the metro to deliver the bomb, as they bring destruction via the public transport system that carries peripherical laborers to the Plano Piloto. The characters' unlikely utopianism converts their spatial and corporal imitations into tools as they overthrow Brasília's dystopian surveillance state.

A subtle but biting critique of neoliberalism links this reconquest of the Federal District's space with Cravalanças's plotline. For Antonio Cordoba, Marquim and Sartana's marginalization excludes the characters from the process of "neoliberal perfectibility and individualistic transcendence" (142). Their consequent need to resist surveillance by the totalitarian,

technocratic state also creates a parallel between the characters' plot and Harvey's view of contemporary utopianism:

> What Foucault regards as 'a panoptican [sic] effect' through the creation of spatial systems of surveillance and control (polis = police) is also incorporated into utopian schemes. This dialectic between imaginative free play and authority and control throws up serious problems . . . Confronting this relationship between spatial play and authoritarianism must, therefore, lies at the heart of any regenerative politics that attempts to resurrect utopian ideals. (*Spaces* 163)

Marquim and Sartana find themselves condemned to life at society's extreme margins due to their youthful embrace of self-expression and "black music."[140] With such benign gestures of hope and empowerment met with brutality, the characters find themselves with no recourse for negotiation. This impasse, as Luiz Felipe Kojima Hirano argues, necessitates a violent reaction: "Se não há possibilidade de diálogo nem sujeitos capazes de mediar a relação das cidades-satélites com Brasília, a via possível, encontrada por Marquim, é explodir uma bomba sonora no Plano Piloto" (224). The film's autocratic technocracy represents the logical conclusion of the Federal District's prioritization of symbols of progress above humanism. Faced with the choice of resignation or revolutionary utopianism, the characters choose to annihilate the center to pave the way for a radically different society.

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[140] "Black music" is the local name for the soul-based genre played at the Quarentão club and popular during the 1980s. In an interview with Carol Almeida, Queirós explains the importance of this genre at the time:

> A black music era a coisa mais potente que existia nos anos 80, porque era o corpo que mais radicalmente negava o que era Brasília, representada pelo homem branco, pelos filhos de embaixadores que escutavam The Cure. A black music surge no Brasil para negar o parâmetro de consumo do homem do centro. Então ele é inicialmente criminalizado, porque se aquele corpo tem potência, ele é revolução.

Details of dialogue and acting in Cravalanças's storyline suggest and ultimately refute a future society based on a benign extrapolation of contemporary capitalism. His decision to assist Marquim and Sartana at the expense of his society of origin appears to confirm the nihilism Alfredo Suppia sees in the film's conclusion:

> A ação final, transformadora, não formula solução possível . . . a capital está em ruínas e os sobreviventes do Quarentão foram vingados, mas e depois? Tal desfecho, francamente *nihilista*, parece operar no diapasão de um 'grito' por justiça da parte das populações periféricas... ("Acesso")

In contrast with this scream of vengeance, the Brazil of 2070 is a rational paradise of supposed racial equality. The agent's boss (Gleide Firmino) is Afro-Brazilian, and his mission of evidence collection doubtless marks a new, progressive era of racial politics. Close attention to the interaction between employer and employee, however, underscores the director's dubiousness about the possibility of major change derived from preexisting social and political structures.

Early in the film, a fixed camera captures the time traveler crouched in the corner of his ship (a shipping container) unable to respond to communication from the "Nave-mãe que vê tudo" (0:07:45-0:09:00). Frustrated at his inability to request a replacement for money lost en route, Cravalanças mimes shooting to express his frustration at his situation and his employers. A ray gun sound fires on the soundtrack, bringing to mind the subtle threats of violence in *A cidade é uma só?*. Cravalanças then delivers a monologue about his physical and psychological wounds, estrangement from his family, and, again, his lack of funds. The viewer can thus conclude that his apparently utopian future outsources the mission of seeking racial justice to an underpaid, poorly equipped contractor supposedly under continuous surveillance. The panopticon, it seems, remains firmly in place.

Thrown into the past with scarce financial resources, Cravalanças's mobility is nearly as limited as that of Marquim and Sartana. In fact, it is Sartana who first surveils the agent and not vice versa, drawing his likeness and even predicting his location. Cravalanças largely inhabits empty lots and other degraded areas of Ceilândia, remaining unpaid for three years of labor until Firmino's administrator reaches him with the following message: "Sem provas não há passado, sem passado no money, ok, no money" (0:39:00-0:40:30). The investigator at last completes his mission only to discover that he will only be paid and authorized to return to 2070 if he prevents the sonic bomb's explosion (1:23:00-1:23:30). Given his mistreatment by his future handlers, it comes as little surprise that he allies with the oppressed, marginalized citizens of the past to destroy Brasília and facilitate radical, structural change in the capital.

Cravalanças enunciates his ultimate disillusionment during a climactic gunfight against invisible enemies. First, a static camera observes him dodging whizzing bullets in a junkyard. A cut positions the camera parallel to a batch of twisted metal while the agent shoots with his hand, yelling:

> Toma aí, paga pau do progresso. Toma aí, duzentas e vinte e cinco prestação. Toma aí, ferro retorcido do caralho. Não vai vir aqui não, vai ficar aí no futuro. O progresso é o futuro mesmo. Ninguém tem a moral de cair pra dentro do baguio, não! Traá! Racista aqui não vai mudar a cara nunca, vai ficar desse jeito mesmo. Toma, Europa do inferno. Toma, todo mundo. Toma, última pintura do inferno. (1:24:00-1:24:30)

The rapid-fire monologue efficiently interweaves economic exploitation, an ideological elevation of progress, and racial injustice. His condemnation of Europe expands this criticism to include colonialism. These systems, all associated with *Branco sai*'s invisible Plano Piloto, must be destroyed for Cravalanças, Marquim, and Sartana to assert their right to the city. In a final grace

note, Cravalanças sighs, turns to the camera and shoots, a gesture that Oliveira and Macial interpret as highlighting the complicity of the typically white and middle-class Brazilian cinematic audience in these oppressive institutions (27).[141] By breaking the fourth wall, Cravalanças extends the film's call for utopianism to include the public who benefit from the neoliberal status quo still influential in 2070.

Fig. 13. Cravalanças's invisible gunfight (1:24:00)

[141] Queirós describes the scene's conclusion as a moment of collaborative self-criticism between performer and film crew to Flávio Andrade et al.:

> Quando o Dilmar atira na câmera no final do filme, ele estava atirando na equipe, porque estava puto com a gente, inclusive porque percebeu que existia algo de ridículo ali, de uma tentativa da câmera de colocá-lo num lugar não ideal. E isso, pra ele, era o gesto do homem branco. Pra mim, um dos pontos fundamentais no processo de um filme é achar esse espaço de contradição entre a gente.

The brief but unmistakable anti-colonial rhetoric in *Branco sai* coexists with an ongoing endorsement of pan-African and peripherical artistic expression as a vector of utopianism. The sonic bomb includes only sounds and music from Ceilândia itself, though the inclusion of a rap by local stalwart Dino Black creates a point of reference with this genre's Jamaican and African American history (0:52:00-0:54:30). Other details further link the bomb plot with international black culture, including Cravalanças's Nigeria national soccer team jersey and Marquim's preference for American soul records while DJing for his pirate radio channel. Particularly symbolic is the 1986 track "Roaches" by Bobby Jimmy and the Critters, which reminds the viewer of the Quarentão's ties to international, black music and foreshadows the Plano Piloto's impending apocalypse:

> Look at all these roaches
>
> Around me everyday
>
> Need somethin' strong
>
> To make 'em go away
>
> . . .
>
> They run so fast
>
> They always get away
>
> I bet you there'll be roaches
>
> Runnin' around on judgement day. (1:08:40-1:10:20)

While intended as humorous, the song's lyrics correspond with Queirós's proposal that Brasília must be destroyed to reignite utopianism in the contemporary Federal District. As in *A cidade é*

uma so?, peripherical music rooted in the black community remains a fundamental tool for amplifying marginalized voices and expressing desire for change.

The film's final sequence is a multilayered reaffirmation of the potency of several genres of peripherical art. The choice of Sartana's drawings as the visual medium through which the viewer observes the devastating detonation of the sonic bomb suggests that the utopian potential of visual arts mirrors that of music. This series of drawings, traced by Shockito's own hand, brings the viewer from the equivalent of a wide shot showing the skyline under bombardment to a close-up of the screaming faces of the fleeing oppressors (1:31:30-1:32:45). In between, Cravalanças hovers menacingly above the National Museum, representing the threat to elite artistic hegemony embodied by the cinema of CEICINE and the musicians of the satellite cities. Queirós chooses not to repeat the audio collected by Marquim and Jamaika during the scene, instead playing MC Dodô's "Bomba explode na cabeça," a song that likewise employs violent imagery to suggest the need for continued aspiration.[142] *Branco sai* avoids prescription regarding Brasília's future, yet the film leaves little doubt that a rebuilt city grounded in the creativity and aspiration of peripherical art will be more equitable than the contemporary capital.

[142] Most of the lyrics are centered on violence and the drug trade, yet Gustavo Furtado notes that Queirós intertextually resignifies the song's reference to "correria," (due to the word's presence in the name of Dildu's political party), to suggest that MC Dodô in fact calls out for "a more tangible insurgency that will occur through an allegiance among those on the margins…" (138).

In Darkest Night: Searching for Unity in *Era uma vez Brasília* (2017)

Queirós turns his critical eye to the recent past in *Era uma vez Brasília* (2017), tracing the period from Dilma Rousseff's impeachment to Michel Temer's assumption of the presidency in another science fictional Ceilândia. Although this close focus on national politics represents a new approach, the filmmaker affirms to Natalia Amarante Furtado that his outlook has long remained tied to the country's leadership:

> [Estou] Muito, muito pessimista. Do jeito que está hoje... Assim, eu acho que é um retrocesso muito grande, politicamente falando. Porque o governo Lula e Dilma teve 12 anos de políticas progressistas com todas as contradições. [. . .] Porque existe agora uma nova ética, uma nova política do governo Temer, que é obviamente voltada para uma ideia neoliberal, absurda, em que essas pessoas vão ser limadas do processo de novo.

While *Era uma vez* is undeniably downbeat about the near future, Queirós resists fatalism by again suggesting that cultural production and political action rooted in the periphery might stymie the nation's accelerating, exclusionary neoliberalism. Still, the film's utopian horizon remains unmistakably dim.

Era uma vez prioritizes aesthetic provocation over straightforward allegory, yet the film nonetheless possesses a discernible plot. WA4 (Wellington Abreu), a prisoner from the planet Sol Nascente, travels to Brasília to assassinate JK.[143] If his mission proves successful, his impoverished family will be awarded a home.[144] After his spaceship experiences mechanical

[143] Queirós does not explain the motive underlying this assignment. Still, the inclusion of multiple presidential speeches on the soundtrack suggests a parallel with Behr's poetic critique of JK. It stands to reason that WA4's assassination of Brasília's founder would erase his utopian rhetoric that has served to obscure the capital's devolution into authoritarianism and apartheid.

[144] Sol Nascente is the name of the largest *favela* in the contemporary Federal District, drawing an immediate parallel between the character's exploitation and the incarceration of Brazil's

problems, however, he arrives in Ceilândia in 2016. In the satellite city, he unites with Marquim (Marquim do Tropa) and Andreia (Andreia Vieira), members of a resistance group intent on rooting out the "monsters" that have invaded Congress, the ministries, and the presidential palace. These peripherical warriors attempt to locate and kill a few political monsters without success. The film concludes as the fighters howl through skull-shaped horns while Michel Temer delivers his first speech as Brazilian president.

Queirós remains committed to aesthetic innovation in *Era uma vez* while straying further from the conventions of linear narrative. Describing his film to Olavo Barros, the director draws clear parallels to Rocha's *Eztetyka do sonho*: "a gente não quer prender o filme na ideia de esteticamente real. A gente fugia de um lugar organizado, onde tem início, meio e fim. As coisas não acontecem no filme, as sequências acabam, né, terminam, não no sentido de finalização. . . . Flui como se fosse um sonho." Quierós and cinematographer Joana Pimena eschew the exuberant, handheld camerawork of *A idade da terra*, however, and instead prioritize long, static takes. Although unusual in a film incorporating elements of the action and science fiction genres, this unmoving camera effectively evokes the sense of segregation and immobility that connects this feature with the director's prior work. The predominance of nighttime scenes and minimal presence of inspirational music, on the other hand, differentiate the film from *Branco sai* and *A cidade é uma só?*.

The film's defiance of realism does not impede Queirós's criticism of segregation and injustice in the Federal District. In an interview with Jorge Mourinha, the director confirms that *Era uma vez* intentionally portrays Ceilândia as a "cidade-presídio" by exaggerating the satellite

poorest citizens. Further, WA4 was convicted for invading private land to build a home for his family in an obvious connection with Brasília's early history.

city's existing architecture. The film's interior and exterior spaces leave little doubt of the power imbalance between the expressive architecture of the houses of Congress and the restrictive metal seen in Ceilândia's real structures and the artisanally-welded vehicles of WA4 and the freedom fighters. Though the characters access the Plano Piloto freely (at least at night), Queirós redoubles the carceral imagery visible in *Branco sai*.

The characters' narrative arcs further underscore the penal nature of the satellite city. In one scene, the police check on Andreia at her home. As she descends the stairs leading from her apartment to the building's entrance, nearly the entire frame is composed of horizontal or vertical bars (0:51:00). Shortly thereafter, Andreia recounts the true story of her incarceration in an extended monologue that transitions into a conversation with her son. She recounts her unjust conviction for accidentally killing a man who sexually harassed her and the effects of her imprisonment on her family, concluding with the pessimistic observation that, "o mínimo que fosse de coisa boa, melhor do que ruim" (0:54:30-0:57:30). WA4's backstory of imprisonment after conviction for squatting likewise incorporates actor Wellington Abreu's real experiences (Mourinha). For his part, WA4 quickly adapts to the carceral spatiality of Ceilândia after his long stay in the tight confines of his spaceship where he exercises, smokes, and sits in silent reflection in a long sequence underscoring his imprisonment in the ship (0:19:00-0:24:00).

Fig. 14. Bars surrounding Andreia's home (0:51:00).

The pedestrian overpass over the metro train tracks where the film begins and ends recurrently situates all three of principal figures in what amounts to a metal cage. The camera generally frames the characters against its grates, though occasional wide shots highlight their enclosure. The metro, reimagined by Marquim and Sartana as a weapon against oppression in *Branco sai*, now symbolizes intractable segregation and incarceration. In one silent scene, the public transport system carries prisoners (including a man played by Cláudio Irineu Shokito) to an unseen Ceilândia prison (1:02:30-1:04:10). Just afterward, WA4 fires his blunderbuss at the speeding train without making any visible impact (1:04:10-1:05:00). While the characters never directly address the prison convoys, the implication is crystalline: Ceilândia is a prison reserved for subjects considered unworthy by a neoliberal elite intent on reinforcing the Plano Piloto's association with progress.

The general impotency of the peripherical resistance fighters during their forays to the city center confirms the effectiveness of the Federal District's apartheid. The mass destruction of the center seen in *Branco sai* is impossible in *Era uma vez*. Although WA4 shoots at the House of Representatives early in the film, his efforts fail to impact the modernist landmark (0:5:30-0:06:20). Later, during one of the film's most striking sequences, Marquim sits on the Esplanada dos Ministérios at night while the House votes in favor of Rousseff's impeachment (0:24:45-0:28:30). A wide angle underscores the gulf between the character, sitting silently in a welding mask, and the structures illuminated in the background. Marquim remains static in the foreground as each "Yes" vote from representatives of Paraná garners cheers, airhorn blasts, and screams of "Brasil!" from the onlookers visible on the margins of the frame. At one point, a helicopter flies overhead, briefly illuminating the silhouettes of the crew with its light. This image links the film's diegesis and extra-cinematic construction, revealing the sensation of isolation and powerlessness common to both characters and crew.

Fig. 15. Marquim on the Esplanada dos Ministérios during impeachment preceedings (0:25:30).

Whereas the film exaggerates discriminatory uses of space in the Federal District, the pessimistic presentation of contemporary segregation and national politics requires minimal defamiliarization. *Era uma vez* approximates an anti-utopian perspective on the capital until the film's final moments hint that the peripherical freedom fighters may yet gain the right to the Plano Piloto. This final break from fatalism affirms the critical dystopian potential of the film's critique of segregation and offers hope for a more equitable Federal District. The small collective of *ceilandense* warriors make their final appearance during a pause in Temer's speech. Grouped in a tight formation and depicted in close focus, the resistance fighters call out through their skull-shaped horns in a rebuke to the new president's disingenuously hopeful rhetoric.[145] Though

[145] As if validating the denunciations of historical right-wing sabotage in Brazil elaborated by Rousseff during the opening credits, Temer betrays his florid, utopian rhetoric by foreshadowing the neoliberal austerity to come. After preaching unity and hopefulness, Temer states that the

the group's location is initially unclear, a cut reveals WA4, Marquim, and Andreia posed on a rooftop near the Palácio do Congresso Nacional (1:29:15-1:30:15). This framing underscores the privilege of this position as the protagonists' heads align with the Senate, the twin office towers, and the House of Representatives, respectively. This unexpected image counterbalances the prevailing sensation of isolation and political impotence in *Era uma vez*, asserting the ongoing (if remote) possibility of political realignment in Brasília.

Fig. 16. The freedom fighters framed against Congress (1:30:10).

Despite this brief allusion towards hopefulness, the final scene of *Era uma vez* redoubles film's dubious posture towards utopianism. After a temporary absence from the soundtrack,

economy will be the focus of his presidency. Upon hearing this proclamation, WA4 and the freedom fighters destroy their car (and its radio) to temporarily silence the new president (1:25:45-1:29:15).

Temer's voice returns as the protagonists unite for a final time in the enclosed pedestrian overpass (1:33:15-1:35:30). The new president describes his participation in the "Ponte para o futuro" initiative designed to catalyze Rousseff's impeachment, exemplifying the appropriation of utopian terminology and symbolism also audible during speeches delivered during the impeachment vote. As Temer reiterates the importance of economic growth for his regime, the characters hear mysterious sounds that appear to be growing closer. The camera highlights the heroes' confinement via a cut to a position outside the bridge while the new head of state concludes his statement by describing the sun rising on the horizon. Metal doors slam and sirens approach on the soundtrack, signifying the revitalization of the police and penal apparatus that divides Ceilândia from the Plano Piloto. The president's promise of dawn is pure fallacy as the periphery's unending night continues.

As the camera returns to its previous position inside the bridge, the protagonists stare directly into the camera, silently breaking the fourth wall (1:36:30-1:36:50). In a parallel with Cravalanças in *Branco sai*, their gaze presents an unspoken challenge to the viewer. Given the impending turn towards austerity politics and the physical and socioeconomic limitations of the peripherical resistance fighters, there is little hope for change without the involvement of the middle class and others living beyond the satellite city's limits. Unlike Cravalanças, however, WA4 remains impassive instead of shooting towards the camera. Without this implied violence, the viewer is not condemned for inaction but rather silently implored to join the characters and react to the film's critical dystopian depiction of contemporary Brasília.

Chapter Two Conclusion

As Gilles Deleuze argues in *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, it is time, and not solely movement, that defines the art of cinema (11). The challenge of representing Brasília's unique temporality plays a key role in each of the films analyzed in this chapter. Rocha, Vaz, Thomas and Hirsch, and Queirós all negotiate hopefulness a city whose initial aspirations to inaugurate a new, utopian historical era have long since deteriorated. For some, this legacy continues to inspire new ambitions in a bitterly divided city. For others, disillusionment rooted in this historical failure serves as an insurmountable obstacle to renewed aspiration.

The selected directors all acknowledge that straightforward editing and chronological narrative fails to fully reflect the resultant challenge of utopian thought in the contemporary capital. Instead, visual juxtapositions and unstable temporality connect the included works regardless of their respective engagement with realism, mysticism, and science fiction. Imagining a better future in a city whose reality testifies to the unlikelihood of such efforts is no simple task. Still, most of the included filmmakers avoid anti-utopian resignation by exploring the continued resonance of failed, historical aspiration or considering the critical dystopian implications of this legacy. A utopian tabula rasa remains impossible, yet creativity and resourcefulness like that employed in the creation of these films might yet redirect the utopian impulse dormant in Brasília towards creating a brighter future for the Federal District.

Among the included works, *A idade da terra* and *Branco sai* come closest to a radically utopian vision of the capital despite nearly opposite approaches to the city. While these two cinematic visions share a belief that Afro-Brazilian (or pan-African) culture must be a fundamental element of a reimagined capital, their understanding of Brasília's origins diverge greatly. For Rocha, Brasília remains an important testament to the possibility of progress in

Brazil despite its tendency to alienate residents and its appropriation by the military regime. Even as he acknowledges a more tempered form of utopianism may be more effective, the director effectively conjures the power of the city's original political and mystical aspirations. Queirós, on the other hand, depicts the Plano Piloto as a paradigmatically dystopian surveillance state worthy of destruction, not acclaim. Expanding on the implicit power of peripherical music seen in *A cidade é uma só?*, he suggests that this medium could form the basis of a new, inclusive Brasília. Unfortunately for the current inhabitants of the city center, such a plan will require the annihilation of the existing infrastructure and population.

Era uma vez joins *Insolação* as the most pessimistic visions of Brasília. Neither work excludes the possibility of hope, yet Queirós, Thomas and Hirsch illustrate little chance of fundamental change in the capital. For the Ceilândia-based artist, the end of the PT governments redoubles the exclusionary spatial practices and criminal injustice already common in the Federal District. Though peripherical artists will continue to resist this rightward turn, their right to the Plano Piloto remains tenuous at best. Hirsch and Thomas invoke a contemporary sense of ennui and alienation rooted in the city's design. Just as Holston noted *brasilite* in the high modernist city, the directors perceive widespread interpersonal disconnect related to the city's failures as a utopian project and its massive scale. A post-utopian approach that builds on this unfortunate baseline leads a few characters towards growth and connection, yet most of the film's ensemble cast find themselves dead, grieving, or otherwise experiencing despair.

The depiction of utopianism in Vaz's films resists synthesis yet thoroughly evokes the sensation of temporal defamiliarization. The elusive nature of the capital in "Sacris pulso" and "A idade da pedra" presents a challenge to the social or ideological critique needed for post-utopian thought. Like Rocha and Queirós, Vaz balances apocalypse and utopian reinvention.

Unlike the other filmmakers, however, Vaz foregrounds the sensation of living in and thinking about Brasília. Still, "A idade da pedra" includes an underlying social critique centered on geographical divisions that, if made explicit, would closely parallel Queirós's critique of the Federal District's center-periphery dynamic.

The selected filmmakers share awareness of Brasília's history as a site of failed aspiration, yet there is little consensus about how this legacy affects contemporary utopianism. Still, the selected films refrain from the straightforward post-utopianism common in literary depictions of the capital. Instead, directors foreground the city's complex temporality to relay the challenge of conducting the historical and social criticism underlying such an approach to change. Despite this key difference, the films reflect a similar diversity of thought. Lispector's temporally estranged yet cautiously optimistic *crônicas* inspire not only Almino's novels but arguably all of the included films. Even *Insolação,* which parallels the pessimistic view of Brasília's design in *A noite da espera*, indirectly cites "Brasília." No film is as sincerely radically utopian as Ribeiro's "Ivy-Marãen," as Rocha highlights the city's flaws alongside proffering ongoing belief in its original strains of utopianism and Queirós's audacious vision of revolutionary utopian change requires the destruction of the Plano Piloto. Although Brasília failed as a revolutionary project, many recent artists in both media draw some degree of inspiration from the capital's history of grand aspiration. This legacy of radical utopian thinking, however unsuccessful, provides an outline for contemporary social dreaming that continues to differentiate Brasília from cities less associated with the concept of utopia.

SECTION TWO

São Paulo, *Sociedade Alienada:* Resignation and Aspiration in Brazil's Largest City

SECTION INTRODUCTION

Historical Context

São Paulo's explosive demographic and economic growth since the nineteenth century has remade this regional capital into a wealthy and cosmopolitan megalopolis. The city's early history as a colonial backwater throws its current wealth and influence into relief. Jesuits founded the village of São Paulo dos Campos de Piratininga in 1554, establishing an early interior settlement among the indigenous Tupi-Guarani people on a plateau fifty-five kilometers inland. The encampment first served as a point of origin for proselytizing missions, yet groups of explorers, prospectors, and slavers known as *bandeirantes* displaced the Jesuits by the late sixteenth century. While the *bandeirantes* remain central figures in the city's mythology, they had little impact on the city's current affluence. In fact, São Paulo remained a regional trading center throughout much of the eighteenth century, buoyed by the discovery of gold in Minas Gerais and the cultivation of sugarcane in the *oeste paulista* agricultural region.[146]

The rise of coffee cultivation in the second half of the nineteenth century radically changed São Paulo's fortunes. As Nicolau Sevcenko details, São Paulo's position between major coffee plantations and the port city of Santos rapidly redefined the city as an important business center. This booming commodity trade enriched the local elite and catalyzed a wave of primarily

[146] As Francisco Vidal Luna and Herbert S. Klein detail, slavery remained fundamental to agricultural expansion in São Paulo, with the city's growth fueled by "an expanding African slave labor force rather than as a result of any major technological revolution" (4).

European immigration to the agricultural zone and capital alike (77). In subsequent decades, São Paulo's newfound economic clout and growing population made the state (alongside Minas Gerais) a center of political power during the First Brazilian Republic.

The coffee boom likewise accelerated the transformation of the city's urban fabric. As Lúcia Sá describes, *paulista* agricultural barons invested heavily in São Paulo, developing prestigious, centrally located neighborhoods that, in turn, displaced much of the city's poor and Afro-Brazilian population (12-13).[147] In the first years of the twentieth century, mayor Antônio da Silva Prado oversaw a slate of reforms that demolished what remained of the city's colonial roots and used environmental engineering to ready the formerly swampy territory for verticalization (Sevcenko 79).[148] Eduardo Cesar Leão Marques notes that the First World War cemented the city's industrial base, primarily benefitting the members of the agricultural elite who invested in the production of textiles, furniture, and construction materials (34). These profits in turn fueled further construction and urban reform including the spread of skyscrapers (beginning with the 1929 inauguration of the Edifício Martinelli) and the Haussmannian Plano das Avenidas that readied the city for automobiles in the 1930s (Sá 14). Still, these markers of modernity continued to obscure ongoing social inequality and growing environmental degradation (Marques 34).

By the 1940s, São Paulo's booming industrial economy began to attract massive numbers of internal migrants. The arrival of these largely Northeastern newcomers over the following

[147] Eduardo Cesar Leão Marques names Campos Elísios (founded in 1878) and Higienópolis (founded 1898) as exemplary of this phenomenon (34).

[148] The building often considered the city's first, the Pátio do Colégio, is in fact a 1954 replica of the Jesuit Indian school (built 1554), almost all of which was destroyed in 1882 to construct a new municipal government headquarters (Sá 1).

decades fueled horizontal urban expansion as property speculation pushed São Paulo's poor population towards growing *bairros* in the urban periphery (Sá 14, Marques 37).[149] This outward spread blurred the borders between São Paulo and the nearby industrial cities known as the ABC *paulista* (Sá 15). Only a small city a hundred years prior, the São Paulo of 1980 had grown to comprise a polycentric network of interconnected municipalities, comfortably fulfilling Jean Gottmann's definition of a megacity (in Sá 3).

Reading a Megalopolis: Identity, Myth, and Ideology

The contemporary city's size and dynamism pose a challenge to critics. While Beal notes a long tradition of reading cities as texts wherein the metropolis "embodies a character's state of mind, captures the mood of a generation, reflects social relations, or embellishes a desired tone or emotion," Sá describes contemporary São Paulo as nearly inapprehensible (*The Art* 89; 22).[150] In contrast to Brasília's highly legible, high modernist design, São Paulo's growth has been both rapid and piecemeal. The city's resultant material and sociocultural divisions and inconsistencies create an obvious parallel with Néstor García Canclini's assessment of Mexico City: "We cannot know the whole city, and we no longer find it possible to comprehend the whole thing. We limit ourselves to our own micropolis within the larger urban scene, and we visit only fragments of others' micropolises" (44). The quantity and heterogeneity of cultural production centered on São Paulo since 1980 function as a major obstacle for critical synthesis even for a study focused

[149] In contrast with a *favela*, a *bairro* is a relatively neutral division within the city's geography, though some such neighborhoods remain the subject of considerable prejudice (Sá 80).

[150] Beal lists the following critics as having contributed to the concept of reading a city: Kevin Lynch (in *The Image of the City*), Roland Barthes (in "Semiology and the Urban"), Henri Lefebvre (in *The Production of Space*), Michel de Certeau (in *The Practice of Everyday Life*), and Bruno Carvalho (in *Porous City: A Cultural History of Rio de Janeiro*) (*The Art* 89).

on a single theme. Indeed, a panoramic vision of utopianism in the literary or cinematic megacity remains beyond the scope of this dissertation. Consequently, the following chapters prioritize geographical, class, gender, and racial diversity to avoid adopting a pinhole focus on any of São Paulo's microcities.

Whereas Brasília's explicit association with utopian yearning serves as a shared point of reference for contemporary writers and filmmakers, São Paulo's ties to this concept remain diffuse. As a result, recent invocations of utopia and dystopia in the megacity dialogue with varied understandings and manifestations of each term. This disunity presents an interesting contrast with representations of Brasília yet challenges effective comparative analysis within the limits of this dissertation. Therefore, the following chapters include works whose respective invocations of utopian thought relate to the concepts of local identity, myths, and ideology. These interrelated themes stand out among stylistically and thematically varied works, facilitate the inclusion of diverse writers and filmmakers, and create points of connection with myriad forms of utopian and dystopian thought relevant in contemporary representations of the megacity.

Critics from several fields have effectively identified defining traits of São Paulo's local mythology and ideology. In her study of the city, historian Barbara Weinstein asserts that regional *paulista* identity "has been inseparable from São Paulo's ever more spectacular economic success story. But it has also been inseparable from another 'spectacular' narrative of a very different sort—the representations of poverty and backwardness in the Nordeste" (4). This juxtaposition between rich, industrious city and impoverished, rural Northeast became further entrenched as the southeastern metropolis industrialized and adopted the slogan "São Paulo não pode parar" (Sá 16). By the middle of the twentieth century, the city's association with progress

and modernity "became something that could go without saying—the ultimate sign of a successful, or hegemonic, construction" (Weinstein 6). Though accepted gradually, the city's supposed exceptionalism had become fundamental to local identity.

Sociologist Jessé Souza identifies a similar phenomenon in his study of mythology and the formation of social classes in Brazil. Enriched by the coffee boom of the late nineteenth century, the *paulista* elite sought to consolidate their power within the First Republic in part by encouraging belief that the region's relative separation from the federal government was the decisive factor in its rapid, capitalist development (118). The rugged, individualistic *bandeirantes* became a symbol of a local pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps ethos. The market, increasingly transformed into myth, became a barometer of individual and collective morality:

> O núcleo da ideia é transformar o mercado, então dominado pela elite paulista, na fonte e no fundamento de toda a virtude. Ao mesmo tempo, transformar o Estado, quando estiver nas mãos dos inimigos políticos, em fonte de toda a vileza, corrupção e ineficiência. Por mais simplista e banal que seja, isto convenceu todo mundo, não só na época, mas até hoje, no Brasil. (J. Souza 119)

While J. Souza acknowledges the complexity and long duration of the process by which such myths became ideology,[151] he identifies São Paulo as the historical seat of the liberal economic

[151] J. Souza notes the importance of the local press and academia in this process, calling São Paulo's major newspapers, founded in the 1920s, "o principal aparato estrutural de dominação ideológica das outras classes" (113). The sociologist likewise notes the importance of USP, which he names, "a ponta de lança de um esquema de poder elitista que resultou na elaboração da ideologia hegemônica do liberalismo vira-lata brasileiro" (111). Although these generalizations elide many journalists and academics who did not participate in this exclusionary project, there is no doubt that these institutions played an important role in the expansion of *paulistano* liberalism to the national stage.

ethos[152] central to the national imagination since the 1950s (125).[153] As this formerly regional ideology became increasingly widespread, the prioritization of progress and profit that catalyzed the megacity's growth became influential on the national scale.

The military period saw a redoubled embrace of the economic liberalism incubated in São Paulo (J. Souza 138). Despite years of macroeconomic success under this system, Brazil's years of authoritarian rule likewise saw growing rates of socioeconomic inequality that continued apace after redemocratization. In her analysis of São Paulo during this time, Teresa Caldeira observes that rates of poverty and violence rose well into the 1990s: "Until recently, progress seemed indeed to be São Paulo's—and Brazil's—destiny. However, the 1980s have been labeled 'the lost decade': instead of growth, there was deep recession . . . At the beginning of the 1990s, the belief in progress gave way to pessimism and frustration" (41). Despite consequent disillusionment among some who suffer under this status quo, the current, democratic era has included a redoubling of faith in markets among Brazil's political elite. São Paulo remains the national center of neoliberal economics and ideology, with the nation's largest political parties in the years since redemocratization rarely departing from the *doxa* that have long defined *paulista* identity:

> …o PT [é] prisioneiro da mesma visão do mundo de sua contraparte, o PSDB. [. . .] O PT é, afinal, filho do mesmo ambiente pseudocrítico construído em São Paulo para tornar invisível o lastro liberal-conservador e que depois, em decorrência da força econômica e

[152] My descriptions of São Paulo's identity as liberal refers to an engagement with economic liberalism grounded in support for free markets and private property that has remained consistent during periods of authoritarian and democratically elected governance alike.

[153] Weinstein agrees, naming liberalism the "ideological glue" of the emerging elite yet noting that "it tended to reinforce, rather than challenge, a hierarchical vision of Brazilian society both within and beyond the borders of São Paulo" (20).

> ideológica da cidade e do estado, tornou-se hegemônico em âmbito nacional. (J. Souza 155)

The megalopolis's consistent, long-term cultural emphasis on modernization and profit noted by the previously cited critics and geographers M. Santos and Wagner Costa Ribeiro continues to define São Paulo as a paragon of liberal capitalism even as this once-regional ethos became hegemonic on a national scale (*A urbanização* 104; 24). What Alfredo Bosi terms the "ideologia do progresso e do desenvolvimento econômico" is by no means exclusive to São Paulo, yet, as seen in the following chapters, the megacity remains closely associated with this system and its *doxa* ("Ideologia" 16).

Consequences of Progress in the Contemporary City

Brazil's national economic fortunes have fluctuated throughout the early twenty-first century, yet São Paulo has cemented its status among the world's most productive cities by GDP (Marques 3). However, the city's richest ten percent live in varying degrees of luxury while the poorest forty percent earn no more than $100 per month (Marques 3). The city's urban fabric has become increasingly polycentric, yet obvious spatial segregation along racial and class lines persists. Approximately 2.8 million *paulistanos* reside in *favelas* or precarious settlements, often within view of the gated communities or secured apartment towers housing the wealthy (Marques 3). São Paulo is an undeniably economically and culturally dynamic megalopolis, yet these statistics reveal the inequality that makes daily life a struggle for millions of the city's residents.

The literary and cinematic works included in this section portray poverty as the primary issue that characterizes São Paulo as dystopian. Still, four additional social, cultural, and material

phenomena merit consideration in this introduction due to their relevance in utopian and dystopian critique. These themes, violence, cultural amnesia, ecological degradation, and alienation, each connect to the megacity's liberal capitalist identity and resultant socioeconomic inequality yet stand out due to their invocation across stylistically and generically diverse works. A brief description of existing criticism about each issue will provide valuable insight into the ways that the selected authors and filmmakers engage with each phenomenon and facilitate comparisons between the included texts.

The prevalence of violence in the included narratives mirrors the city's high rates of crime from the 1980s until the early 2000s (Marques 43). The growth of drug and arms trafficking gangs, including the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC), attracted significant media attention, yet Caldeira likewise blames state actors for the rising rates of assault in the city: "One of the most disturbing aspects of the increase in violence in contemporary São Paulo is not that violent crime is increasing—which is happening in various Western cities at similar rates—but rather that the institutions of order seem to contribute to this increase instead of controlling it" (138). The aggressive tactics of São Paulo's military police, for example, reveal an implicit mandate to maintain a status quo defined by geographical divisions and inequality. Although mass casualty incidents like the Carandiru prison massacre of 1992 and the retaliatory violence against the PCC in May 2006 monopolize the media spotlight, such events comprise only a small portion of the 11,000 citizens killed by police from 1995-2015 (Caramante).[154] As Robert Muggah describes, municipal rates of violence at last declined in the 2010s, due in part to a lack of competition for the PCC (Muggah). Still, the 2019 massacre of nine teenagers attending a

[154] The city only started keeping records of deaths at the hands of police officers in 1995 (Caramante).

baile funk by police leaves no doubt as to the ongoing possibility of violence in the city's marginalized communities (Pagnan).

The violent history of the military dictatorship likewise informs contemporary representations of São Paulo. In fact, Marques explains that, "public security is one policy sector that has passed through the recent decades unreformed, maintaining the same structure it had during the military period" (43). While authoritarian practices during the military period were not isolated to São Paulo, Andrew Rajca affirms that the city's Departamento Estadual de Ordem Político e Social (DEOPS) was notoriously oppressive during the dictatorship period ("Dynamic Memories" 87). The subsequent lack of institutional reform links recent violence by police to the legacy of imprisonment, torture, and murder by agents of the military regime. Since 2009, the former DEOPS headquarters in the Estação Pinacoteca museum has housed the *Memorial da Resistência* exhibition dedicated to remembering victims of state violence. This display includes recreated prison cells and extensively documented timelines that proffer a warning against current and future violence and repression. Video interviews with survivors remind visitors that redemocratization was no panacea for the wounds engendered during the military period.

While this museum is a powerful heterotopia of memory, Marília Goulart notes the megacity's cultural tendency towards amnesia. For this critic and civil servant, "history and memory have been neglected throughout the centuries, as can be noted in the intense property speculation that results in a constant rebuilding of the city" (154-5). Leila Lehnen echoes this sentiment, describing how, "na capital paulista, a história desaparece entre os arranha-céus que dominam não somente a Avenida Paulista mas que, cada vez mais, vão ocupando bairros tradicionais como vila Madalena e Perdizes" (78). This constant redevelopment prioritizes future construction, upcoming profits, and material signifiers of modernity above cultural memory or

preservation of the urban fabric. M. Santos ties São Paulo's amnesic ethos closely with the city's continued economic success by describing how the megalopolis "constantemente abandona o passado, volta-lhe permanentemente as costas e, em contraposição, reconstrói seu presente à imagem do presente hegemônico, o que lhe tem permitido, nos períodos recentes, uma [sic] desempenho econômico superior, acompanhado por taxas de crescimento urbano muito elevadas" (*O país*, 63). The continual renovation of the city reflects an unceasing push for economic development that simultaneously undercuts efforts at preservation. This unending churn helps preserve the city's highly divided status quo by discouraging the critical engagement with past and present central to post-utopian thought.

As a result of this continuous de- and re-construction, São Paulo's landscape is lacking in what Pierre Nora calls sites of memory (*lieux de mémoire*). The absence of these places that consolidate social memory and a sense of collective belonging fuels cultural amnesia and social alienation (7-8). For Silvia Helena Zanirato, the city's relative paucity of officially designated cultural patrimony exemplifies a disregard for sites of memory (193-195). Acknowledging São Paulo's long-term enchantment with modernity, the same author affirms the need for social mobilization dedicated to slowing the cycle of continuous speculation and construction (200-201). Although the "constant sensation of being a new city" can make São Paulo an exciting, dynamic place, the unceasing drive to create new layers of the city's palimpsest leaves little possibility of critical reflection or collective memory (Sá 1).

The unyielding development and expansion undergirding São Paulo's cultural amnesia have also radically transformed the region's ecology. In her history of the Tietê, Pinheiros, and Tamanduateí rivers, Isabel Cristina Moroz-Caccia Gouveia details an extensive trajectory of degeneration that deprived the contemporary city of reliable access to clean water. Whereas the

region's indigenous inhabitants prized its swampy geography, later settlers came to view the rivers as an impediment to development and began to reshape the natural landscape (Gouveia). As Denise Falcão Pessoa details, this dynamic accelerated during the coffee boom as officials used ecological engineering to maximize the potential value of São Paulo's land: "A drenagem da várzea e a retificação dos Rios Tietê e Pinheiros constituíam um processo de criação de terra urbana com grande possibilidade de ganhos para os investidores" (109). Investment in water infrastructure remains a low priority in the contemporary city. Pedro Luiz Cortes et al. recount how a lack of long-term planning has made shortages a regular occurrence during times of drought in the former watershed (7-8). Further, Chandra Morrison describes how peripherical expansion in the Interlagos area where São Paulo's two primary reservoirs are situated threatens to contaminate the city's water supply (191). In fact, the city's continued reliance on reservoirs built during the early twentieth century exemplifies the selective nature of São Paulo's pursuit of progress. While real estate speculation fuels constant construction, less profitable yet vital infrastructure continues to degrade alongside the region's original ecology.

The outward expansion threatening the megacity's southern reservoirs also contributes to deforestation and air pollution. The rapid growth of *favelas* in São Paulo since the 1980s testifies to the megacity's newfound lack of flat terrain. This growing footprint in turn fuels the air pollution crisis detailed by Helena Ribeiro and João Vicente de Assunção, who name industry and automobiles as the primary sources of contamination (352-353). Despite increased attention to air quality beginning in the 1970s, the city still suffers from severe smog with adverse effects on public health (Ribeiro and Assunção 356-357). For Sevcenko, the pollution and bunkerized aesthetic of the sprawling contemporary city represents the culmination of São Paulo's long ecological decline:

> A paisagem pitoresca, eleita pelos jesuítas, do maciço de colinas entrecortado pelos rios, lagos e vales verdes amplíssimos, por onde serpenteava o Tietê prateado até sumir sob a nuvem azulada da neblina fina, foi rapidamente substituída por um novo cenário de asfalto, concreto armado, aço, alumínio e vidro, entremeado em todos os recantos por cercas de pontas de lanças, grades, guaritas, arame farpado, câmeras de vídeo e sistemas de alarme. (110-111)

Preservation is anathema for a megacity whose culture has long elevated the pursuit of progress and profit. For most, pollution and deforestation remain unfortunate but relatively unimportant side effects of continual growth.

Alienation is the final theme recurrent among dystopian representations of the megalopolis. In fact, this term encompasses two ideas prevalent among the selected texts. One the one hand, the city's capitalist ethos alienates workers from the fruits of their labor. David William Foster highlights this dynamic in Sérgio Luiz Person's influential film *São Paulo, sociedade anônima* (1965):

> In an exceptionally neorealist fashion, Person correlates the psychological vicissitudes of [the protagonist] Carlos's life—his perennial restlessness, his inability to relate emotionally, his dissatisfaction with the model of bourgeois life he has attained—with the alienation, viewed very much in Marxian terms, that industrial capitalism exacts from the individual who supinely accepts participation in the system. (83)

While related to industrial production in this film, exploitation recurs among contemporary works depicting various forms of labor. This variety of alienation contributes to the megacity's stark inequality and reveals the often-disingenuous nature of the city's mythology of meritocratic social ascension.

Alienation in contemporary São Paulo also manifests in a widespread sensation of social disconnect. In their interdisciplinary study of *paulistanos*' feelings about their city, Zulmira Aurea Cruz Bomfim and Enric Pol Urrutia identify a clear contrast between appreciation for São Paulo's dynamism and opportunity and negative emotions rooted in "sadness, gloom, resignation, hopelessness, impotence, angst, solitude, lack of union and affection" (45). Comprising common experiences of anonymity, isolation, and detachment from one's fellow citizens, this generalized sense of alienation remains an unmistakable element of life in contemporary São Paulo. Further fortified by the city's infrequent sites of memory and the fear of violence, social alienation is a chameleonic but omnipresent phenomenon reflected across the works analyzed in Chapters Three and Four of this dissertation.

These social, cultural, and material consequences of São Paulo's deeply ingrained identity provide ample material for dystopian and post-utopian depictions of the megalopolis. Widespread acceptance of stark inequality in a wealthy, capitalist city similarly sets the stage for ideological critiques grounded in utopian thought. The ongoing association between progress, wealth, and morality might make such critical perspectives appear worthless or even actively harmful. Still, the authors and filmmakers included in this section recurrently highlight the connections between contemporary injustices and the megacity's long-held *doxa*. Reimagining a city as expansive, dynamic, and diverse as São Paulo is a complex process, yet dissatisfaction with the material and ideological consequences of megacity's liberal capitalist ethos elicits a wide range of engaging responses.

CHAPTER THREE

Seeking Salvation in Literary São Paulo

Literature in São Paulo: A Brief Overview

São Paulo's legacy as a site of literary production far precedes the city's rise to economic and political prominence. In his history of *paulistana* literature, Mauro Rosso traces the pioneering tendencies of authors based in the city for five centuries. The first such literary innovators were the Jesuits Manoel da Nóbrega and José de Anchieta, whose sixteenth century works of prose and theater were among the earliest texts composed in Brazil (14-15). Also notable are the writers who spent time in the city's Academia de Direito during the nineteenth century. In their time as law students, authors from across the Brazilian territory produced early examples of *indianismo,* romanticism, naturalism, and regionalism (Rosso 165-167, 237, 247).[155] While this legacy of innovation is notable given the city's size and status during this time, the twentieth century saw São Paulo grow into one of Brazil's major literary centers.

The city's arrival on the national scene came through the Brazilian Modernism movement. The Semana da Arte Moderna, hosted at the Teatro Municipal in 1922, highlighted *avant-garde* authors, poets, and plastic artists who broke radically with the realist and Parnassian aesthetics dominant in Brazil at the time. São Paulo remained the center of this influential movement, with the city's rapid modernization serving as an aesthetic and thematic touchstone for highly varied texts including Mário de Andrade's *Paulicéia desvairada* (1922) and Patrícia

[155] Firmino Rodrigues da Silva's "Nênia" foreshadowed the *indianismo* movement, while canonical Romantic authors José de Alencar and Castro Alves each spent time studying in the Academia de Direito (Rosso 165-167). Works by authors linked to this faculty likewise produced early examples of naturalism (Inglês de Souza's *O coronel sangrando*, 1877), and Northeastern regionalist literature (Ezequiel Freire's "Pedro Gobá," 1887) (Rosso 237, 247).

Galvão's *Parque industrial* (1933). This same period saw the dawn of São Paulo's publishing industry and the foundation of the Universidade de São Paulo (USP), institutions which further cemented the city's place at the vanguard of literary production, publication, and criticism.

Among São Paulo's extensive *corpus* of prose literature since the mid-twentieth century, two moments stand out as particularly relevant for this study. First, works produced during the dictatorship established the city as a central site of allegorical and realist dystopian criticism. Texts set in São Paulo like Ignácio de Loyola Brandão's *Não verás país nenhum* (1981) and Mauro Chaves's *Adaptação do funcionário Ruam* (1975) exemplify the dystopian vein of science fictional allegory that Ginway associates with the military period (*Brazilian Science* 14). During the same timeframe, authors including João Antônio and Plínio Marcos adopted the aesthetic known as brutalism or "realismo feroz" to depict the violence and inequality in the megacity's working-class neighborhoods, impoverished periphery, and criminal underworld. For Lucas Amaral de Oliveira, this literature of the 1970s and 1980s comprises "an aesthetic movement that tends to give priority to the immediacy of violence and the direct transmission of experiences in urban centers" (452). The dystopian impulse uniting these stylistically divergent works composed during the dictatorship continues to resonate in subsequent prose depictions of the megacity.[156]

São Paulo's recent tradition of Afro-Brazilian literature also merits consideration. With a few notable exceptions including the *paulistana* Carolina Maria de Jesús's bestselling testimonial *Quarto de despejo* (1960), black writers throughout Brazil have traditionally been marginalized. As Emanuelle K. F. Oliveira details, authors from São Paulo played a fundamental

[156] Riccardi provides further nuance in his analysis of fantastical and realist depictions of São Paulo during the dictatorship by authors including Sérgio Sant'Anna, Ignácio de Loyola Brandão, Ivan Ângelo, and Antônio Torres (233-261).

role in expanding this group's opportunities for publication. The *Cadernos Negros* literary journal founded by the authors Cuti and Jamu Minka has published over forty collections of prose and poetry by black authors since 1978 (3). The Quilombhoje literary collective formed two years later made up an important nucleus for subsequent activism that continues to support Afro-Brazilian literature in the megacity and beyond (E. Oliveira 3-5).

A later group whose collective approach mirrors that of Quilombhoje is the so-called Literatura Marginal movement, also known as Literatura Periférica, spearheaded by Ferréz in the early twenty-first century. Officially inaugurated by the 2001 publication *Caros Amigos/Literatura Marginal*, this collection of largely unknown, primarily Afro-Brazilian authors and poets from São Paulo's periphery found an unexpectedly large audience.[157] The manifesto that opens this publication, Ferréz's "Terrorismo literário," exemplifies the informal style and combative tone typical of a group known for unvarnished, ungrammatical depictions of racism, violence, and exploitation. While designed in part to shock, Silvana José Benevuto notes the implicit utopian ideological critique in the movement's production:

> Aliás, nesta era, a que Jameson chama de pós-modernidade ou de capitalismo tardio, a rebeldia ou a tentativa de manter viva a utopia e projetar, esperançosamente, uma ruptura ao que está posto, tem se tornado cada vez mais difícil. Todavia, parece esta ser a proposta da escritura que se define marginal. (157)

Challenging preconceptions about the periphery and imagining a city free of the *doxa* and institutions that reproduce inequality, these authors achieved an effective Rancièrian redistribution of the sensible from a profoundly marginalized position. As Érica Peçanha do

[157] The success of this edition led *Caros Amigos* to publish two subsequent issues dedicated to Literatura Marginal.

Nascimento describes, many of Literatura Marginal's leading figures including Ferréz, Sérgio Vaz, and Sacolinha, matched this literary utopianism with community activism intended to ameliorate the dystopian dynamics described in their work (248).[158] Ferréz, Sacolinha, and Sonia Regina Bischain have all published prose texts centered on the periphery, yet poetry remains more prevalent among literary production rooted in the megacity's geographical and social margins.

Although the limitations of this dissertation necessitate the exclusion of poetic analysis in favor of a more panoramic approach to prose representations of the megacity, the relevance of recent *paulistana* poetry for an expanded version of this study is beyond dispute.[159] The megacity was, after all, the home base of Haroldo de Campos, who co-founded the internationally influential concrete poetry movement in the 1950s with his brother Augusto and Décio Pignatari (Rosso 317). Beyond his work with this movement seeking a revolutionary realignment of the relationship between the sound, image, and meaning, Campos's former home currently serves as the Casa das Rosas museum dedicated to supporting literature and poetry. The concretists were not the only poetic innovators based in mid-twentieth-century São Paulo, however. The *poesia-práxis* movement of the 1960s led by Mário Chamie and Domingos

[158] To cite just two examples, the poet and novelist Sacolinha (Ademiro Alves) founded the Associação Cultural Literatura no Brasil, working to promote poetry in public schools while Ferréz launched Editora Selo Povo in 2008, publishing low-cost works by marginalized authors and other texts of social criticism (Nascimento 249).

[159] Initial research on poetic anthologies centered on the city confirmed the frequency of recent poems invoking dystopian aesthetics and various forms of utopianism. The collection of peripherical poetry *5 saraus: cada qual com sua poesia, cada qual com sua fúria* (2015), organized by Fabiano Calixto, and the more mainstream *Paixão por São Paulo: antologia poética paulistana* (2004), organized by Luiz Roberto Guedes, each contain between five and ten texts appropriate for an expanded version of this study.

Carvalho da Silva pairs the aesthetic minimalism of concretism with a greater focus on social issues.

Contemporary São Paulo also plays host to an aesthetically and stylistically diverse group of poets. Still, Fábio Weintraub notes the frequent appearance of São Paulo in his survey of socially critical mainstream poetry (that is, poetry published by an established press) in the final decades of the twentieth century (15). This social consciousness is also fundamental to the *saraus* at the heart of the city's peripherical poetic production.[160] These (usually) weekly readings in bars or cultural centers have grown increasingly common in São Paulo since the 1990s, supporting a growing corpus of poetry from São Paulo's outskirts.[161] In a 1998 text, critic Heloísa Buarque de Hollanda describes the power of *saraus* to disseminate work by artists who otherwise have little opportunity to be heard: "O emergente mercado da poesia falada tende a democratizar o consumo de poesia e abrir enormes possibilidades para a redistribuição da fala do poeta num espaço público mais amplo" (in Minchillo 135). Hollanda's optimism has proved prophetic. As Carlos Cortez Minchillo describes, peripherical *saraus* continue to serve as prominent cultural institutions by offering a stage to marginalized performers and connecting artists across media (142-143). While performance is fundamental, work from these gatherings has also been published in anthologies, with poets who honed their skills in *saraus* finding increasing acceptance among established publishing houses.[162]

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[160] As Ruth Barros and Teté Martinho explain, *saraus* were originally private, bourgeois gatherings centered on music and poetry around the turn of the twentieth century, though marginalized artists have since reappropriated the term (168).

[161] Though initially centered in São Paulo, *saraus* now occur throughout Brazil.

[162] As Antonio Eleison Leite details, the first *sarau* to publish an anthology was Sarau da Cooperifa in 2005. Groups including Sarau Elo da Corrente, Sarau da Brasa, Sarau Perifatividade, Sarau de Ademar, Sarau Suburbano, and Sarau Verso em Versos have since

Contemporary *paulistana* prose comprises a vast corpus defined foremost by its heterogeneity. Alongside the previously mentioned production from the city's periphery, mainstream prose authors embrace varied genres and styles to consider the megalopolis. A thorough accounting of this output is impossible in this dissertation, yet a few artists excluded from this study merit mention as their respective oeuvres would doubtless prove interesting subjects for an expanded analysis of utopia and dystopia in the literary megacity. Some writers, including Marçal Aquino, Fernando Bonassi, and Patrícia Melo, draw on the brutalist legacy of João Antônio in their portraits of crime and poverty in the megalopolis. The brief, fragmented stories of Marcelino Freire's *Amar é crime* (2011) likewise engages with São Paulo's underworld. Beatriz Bracher's *Não falei* (2004) and *Antônio* (2007) employ multiple points of view to explore inherited trauma and the legacy of the dictatorship. Reinaldo Moraes's novels highlight the megalopolis's (counter-)cultural dynamism. The author's early, paradigmatically post-modern novels and his later, realist texts all follow ne'er do well, hedonistic protagonists searching for drugs, sex, and artistic fulfillment in exuberantly cosmopolitan versions of São Paulo. Other prominent authors who draw on the city's hyper-connectivity and cultural diversity include Ricardo Lísias, Bernardo Carvalho (in *O sol se põe em São Paulo*, 2009), and Elvira Vigna (in *Por escrito*, 2014). The varied themes, styles, and geographical foci in these authors' work create intriguing points of intersection and contrast with the texts analyzed through the lens of utopian studies in this dissertation.

published their own collections, generally using public funds dedicated to stimulating cultural projects (Leite). Peripherical poets with individual collections published by established editorials include Sérgio Vaz, Allan da Rosa, Mel Duarte, Alessandro Buzo, Dinha, Rodrigo Ciríaco, Michel Yakini and Sacolinha.

Compared to Brasília's literature, the theme of utopia is marginal in *paulistana* production. Still, as this chapter will illustrate, utopia and dystopia resonate among a diverse selection of contemporary representations of São Paulo. As in recent depictions of the capital, revolutionary utopian perspectives remain rare, with post-utopian imagination and critical dystopian thinking the preferred responses to dissatisfaction with the city's status quo. Nonetheless, a few key differences emerge. Recent prose depictions of the megalopolis recurrently incorporate allegorical and science fictional dystopian aesthetics to a degree unseen in their *brasiliense* counterparts. Ideological critique is also increasingly central to production considering São Paulo. These divergences often add an additional layer of complexity to the post-utopian or critical dystopian logic employed to consider the possibility of a better future for the megacity.

The works included in this chapter explore divergent reactions to São Paulo's liberal, capitalist ethos and its material consequences. The chapter opens with the earliest selected text, Ignácio de Loyola Brandão's ecological dystopia *Não verás país nenhum* (1981). Brandão's novel merits inclusion due to its lasting influence, reflected in subsequent included works, and its complex invocation of utopianism combining critical dystopia, ideological critique, and a final turn towards revolutionary praxis. The sequencing of the other texts traces points of philosophical or aesthetic collection rather than relying on chronology. Although stylistically disconnected from *Não verás*, Ferréz's short story collection *Ninguém é inocente em São Paulo* (2006) closely mirrors the novel's vision of utopian thought in its consideration of the material and ideological mechanisms that divide and segregate the city's periphery. The ideological critique central to Ferréz's vision of São Paulo's parallels that of Márcia Tiburi in her novel *Sob os pés, meu corpo inteiro* (2019). Tiburi's work centers on the lasting trauma of the dictatorship

yet coincides with Brandão's text in its emphasis on memory and inclusion of ecological dystopian elements. Luiz Ruffato's fragmented novel *Eles eram muitos cavalos* (2001) foregrounds the peripherical utopianism (or lack thereof) seen in Ferréz's stories and establishes a broad critique of alienation in the megacity that resonates with the detachment of *Sob os pé*'s narrator and protagonist. The final included text, Nelson de Oliveira's *Babel babilônia: novela* (2007), adopts a similarly fractured aesthetic while synthesizing issues important to the previous texts. The novella's São Paulo is a symbol of the progress, oblivion, violence, and environmental devastation spreading throughout formerly rural areas. The work's fantastical conclusion proposes a radical response rooted in the natural world that provokes further contemplation of the limits of utopian thought.

A Prescient Dystopia: *Não verás país nenhum* (1981)

No analysis of dystopia in contemporary São Paulo would be complete without Ignácio de Loyola Brandão's *Não verás país nenhum* (1981).[163] Though published four years before redemocratization, the novel's vison of an authoritarian, ecologically degraded megacity remains all too relevant for subsequent generations of writers. Set in the early twenty-first century, the novel's São Paulo is encircled by climate refugees after the desertification of the Amazon rainforest. Despite a return to democracy in the 1980s, the government known as *O Esquema* has

[163] Born in Araraquara, São Paulo in 1936, Loyola Brandão first moved to the state capital in 1957 to work as a journalist. He published his first collection of short stories, *Depois do sol*, in 1965, and has since created an extensive corpus of short fiction and novels. A rare example of a long-term critical and commercial success, Loyola Brandão earned induction into the Academia Brasileira de Letras in 2019 ("Ignácio de Loyola Brandão"). A year prior, the author returned to explicitly dystopian, fantastical literature with the satirical *Desta terra nada vai sobrar, a não ser o vento que sopra sobre ela*, set primarily in the fictional capital of a futuristic yet familiar Brazil.

redoubled the repression of the military dictatorship. The city is strictly divided and all inter-zonal transit it closely prescribed and surveilled. The text's structure is similarly rigid, as (nearly) every paragraph occupies precisely five lines on the page. The novel's protagonist is Souza, a professor of history forced into an early retirement by *O Esquema*. Though he has spent years conforming to the regime's edicts, the appearance of a mysterious hole in his hand leads Souza to question his acceptance of an oppressive status quo.[164] As he journeys through an infernal São Paulo, he re-engages with dystopian thinking and, eventually, commits to taking action to bring forth a better future.

The striking dystopian imagery of *Não verás* exaggerates the environmental degradation, censorship, and authoritarian violence of the dictatorship period. Brandão's underlying critique, though, focuses on the ideology naturalizing such practices in pursuit of making profit and consolidating progress. This ethos was by no means unique to São Paulo during the military period, yet the city's close association with liberal capitalism makes it an ideal site for an allegorical extrapolation of this system's worst excesses. The megacity of *Não verás* can be read as a microcosm of the nation under the dictatorship. Some of the issues critiqued by Brandão, like Amazonian extractivism, are indeed only tangentially relevant to contemporary São Paulo. Still, the novel's vision of rapacious capitalism and its ideological underpinnings corresponds closely with other contemporaneous and subsequent literary depictions centered specifically on the megalopolis.

While *Não verás*'s São Paulo wholly embraces paradigmatically dystopian images as outlined by Claeys, the novel's tone remains unexpectedly contemplative. This stoic presentation

[164] Brandão first developed the concept of an unexplained hole in a character's hand in the short story "O homem do furo na mão," included in his 1976 collection *Cadeiras proibidas*.

reflects the naturalization of apocalyptic developments for the novel's characters. By evoking resignation and conformity in this way, Brandão underscores the importance of ideological critique for dystopian thinking about the disagreeable phenomena encountered in the novel's plot. In an interview with Vera Lúcia Silva Vieira and Marcia Regina Capelari Naxara, the author references this decision through a comparison with *Zero*, his prior novel likewise set in a quintessentially dystopian São Paulo. Stylistically experimental, absurd, and bitingly critical, *Zero* faced extended censorship due to its obvious targeting of the military regime.[165] Brandão describes this novel as a direct literary attack on the dictatorship: "eu não sou de jogar bomba, mas o *Zero* é a minha bomba. O *Zero* é a minha maneira de atirar contra essa situação aí" (Vieira and Naxara 212). This direct approach, though achieved via an experimental aesthetic, demonstrates the author's goal of calling attention to the ongoing authoritarianism of the military regime. In contrast to the urgency of this warning against events already in progress, *Não verás* functions as a reflection on the long-term effects of hardline rule: "Quando veio o *Não verás* já tinha um abrandamento da coisa; o *Zero* é a instalação de um sistema e o *Não verás* é a consequência desse sistema" (Vieira and Naxara 214). The consequences of the imagined return to authoritarianism in *Não verás* remain appalling, yet Brandão's foregrounds the underlying causes of dictatorship rather than its specific effects.

The novel's environmental dystopia exemplifies this dynamic. Several trends exaggerated in *Não verás*, including large-scale engineering projects and the push to integrate the nation's northern reaches into the national economy, undoubtedly reference specific events from the dictatorship period. At the same time, though, Brandão emphasizes the connections between

[165] As Kristal Bivona details, the novel was concluded in 1969 yet only found a Brazilian publisher in 1975, a year after a translated version was published in Italy (69). Even after this initial publication, the novel was again banned from 1976 until 1979 (Bivona 70).

these phenomena and Brazil's extensive legacy of extractivism. The most explicit examples of this widened historical focus are Souza's recollections of his lumberjack grandfather, which associate the novel's ecological crisis with the modernization of the early twentieth century (129-130). The first hint of this temporally broad critique, however, is the novel's title. The phrase "não verás país nenhum" comes from the penultimate verse of Olavo Bilac's "A pátria" (1904), a paradigmatically *ufanista* poem affirming belief that Brazil's natural bounty signifies predestined greatness:

> Ama, com fé e orgulho, a terra em que nasceste! Criança!
>
> Não verás nenhum país como este!
>
> Olha que céu! que mar! que rios! que floresta!
>
> . . .
>
> Quem com seu suor a fecunda e umedece,
>
> Vê pago e seu esforço, e é feliz, e enriquece!
>
> Criança! não verás país nenhum como este:
>
> Imita na grandeza a terra em que nasceste! (13)

The contrast between the poem's mythologized nature and the devastation of *Não verás* could hardly be more apparent.[166] Still, the proudly capitalist logic of the final verses contains the seeds of the exaggerated greed driving the novel's environmental destruction.

The logic of *ufanismo* on display in "A pátria" corresponds closely with *O Esquema*'s propaganda. Whether evoked in dialogue or announced by loudspeakers in long paragraphs that stand apart from the predominant, five-lines-per-paragraph aesthetic, these governmental

[166] The novel's epigraphs from Christopher Columbus and Pablo Neruda likewise foreground the myth of paradisiacal nature in Latin America (5).

pronouncements disingenuously affirm the ongoing greatness of Brazilian nature. The trajectory of the Caixa dos Vidros de Água is particularly symbolic of this dissonance between propaganda and reality. This museum preserving water from the nation's now-extinct rivers initially offers Souza rare moments of reflection. Though the Caixa was founded during the "Abertos Oitenta" democratic interregnum prior to *O Esquema* seizing control, the dictatorship nonetheless maintains this monument to the nation's paradisiacal nature (153). This unexpected preservation reveals the consistent embrace of *ufanismo* among *O Esquema*, the real military dictatorship, and prior generations of Brazilian politicians and capitalists even as they gradually razed the very bounty they extolled.

The ransacking of the Caixa dos Vidros de Água by desperate citizens seeking potable water gives *O Esquema* a new opportunity to employ *ufanismo* to justify authoritarian political maneuvers. In an italicized announcement, a regime spokesman concludes the official accounting of the looted museum by proclaiming the creation of a giant "Marquise" that will protect the city's residents from the potentially murderous rays of the sun (154). Although this announcement is devoid of further detail, a later description of the (now multiple) "Marquises" connects these structures to a long tradition of official *braggadocio*:

> Fotografadas do espaço, pelo satélite, viu-se que as Marquises formavam a palavra Brasil, visível até da lua. Falação nos Círculos Oficiais, Setores Governamentais, Altas Hierarquias Civiltares, Clubes Resistentes, Bocas de Distrito, Círculos de Assessores Embriagados, Repartições.
>
> Um país onde há séculos se deita falação. Desde a carta de Pero Vaz de Caminha. A falação foi uma característica que os Esquemas souberam capitalizar, introduzindo na

> psicologia popular. Fizeram com que a falação se transformasse numa cortina de fumaça, encobrindo tudo que fosse possível. (322)

The grandiose promise of *O Esquema*'s structures connects the *Marquises* with the national tradition of evoking environmental splendor dating to Caminha's letter in 1500. Just as this letter imagines bountiful harvests while hinting at indigenous peoples' potential for servitude, though, the warped *ufanismo* of Brandão's regime camouflages underserviced concentration camps that unsubtly encourage suicide by direct contact with the sun. Ultimately, the *Marquises* represent another instance of employing utopian imagery to naturalize an unequal, exploitative status quo.

Another notable case of similar propaganda is the repeated affirmation that the Amazon desert is the Ninth Wonder of the World. Though the protagonist initially affirms belief in *O Esquema*'s marketing, his (clandestinely) politically engaged ex-colleague Tadeu Pereira guides him towards a newly critical approach to past and present (99). As the two converse, Souza recalls how the regime's violent enforcement of censorship consolidated the novel's ecological dystopia (99). With all historical documents housed in the impenetrable "prédio da Memória Nacional," frequent reassurances by state media that only small pieces of the Amazon were being sold to loggers assuaged the concerns of an increasingly acritical populace (98). By the time satellite footage revealed the extent of deforestation, the damage was irreversible (99). The regime does not accept culpability but rather proclaims that the devastated rainforest is a new natural marvel. In the same sequence, Tadeu explicitly connects *O Esquema*'s actions to the military dictatorship of 1964-1985: "Estamos chegando à conclusão que nos deixamos enganar. No fundo, era previsível o que viria. Quantos homens da antiga ditadura não continuaram nos postos?" (97). The continued presence of authoritarian leadership after redemocratization allows

for obscurantism and extractivism to continue apace. Still, such abuses are not exclusive to the dictatorship but rather recurrent throughout Brazilian history.

Tadeu's description of the years before *O Esquema*'s rise creates a clear parallel with the (neo)liberal capitalist hegemony of TINA. This illusion of unbreakable ideological consensus retrenched many of the dictatorship's guiding principles: "[A confusão] estava instalada nos Abertos Oitenta e veio se ampliando. Não era só no Brasil, não, era por toda a parte. Confusão ideológica, desencontros. Governo pensava uma coisa, oposição outra, mas oposição e governo pensavam igual, ao mesmo tempo" (119). A return to democracy after dictatorship implies the possibility of major reform yet apparent political unanimity stymied any possibility of radical utopianism. With alternative forms of social organization seemingly impossible, the novel's democratic, capitalist government rapidly devolved into blatant greed during the "Era da Grande Locupletação." This period of extreme speculation created dystopian income inequality whereby, "Oito pessoas ganharam mais dinheiro que toda a população em dez anos de trabalho" (99). This same period saw a booming economy in São Paulo driven by the extractivism that later devastated the Brazil: "As casas sumiram, edifícios dominaram tudo, os espaços ficaram caríssimos, devido à intensa especulação imobiliária. Tudo produto da Grande Locupletação, quando o país foi dividido, retalhado, entregue, vendido, explorado" (31). This exaggerated (and undeniably prescient) vision of late-twentieth century São Paulo calls for dystopian thinking about the upcoming transition to democracy. Still, Brandão makes sure to connect this specific critique of real estate speculation run amok to the ideological critique of capitalism honed through references to *ufanismo*.

Brandão prioritizes the negative juxtapositions central to dystopia, yet Souza's interactions with Tadeu and his mysterious stigmata eventually suggest a utopian horizon

grounded in critique and action. As the strange stain on Souza's palm morphs into a hole, light begins to shine directly through the paradigmatically familiar territory of the back of his hand. His inexplicable affinity for this painless perforation accelerates the end of his marriage yet also triggers renewed utopianism. Through this fantastical development, Souza comes to perceive his prior conformity: "Junto a mim carrego um carro de justificativas para permanecer como sou. Por isso, amo este furo. Ele me mostra de repente que existe o não. A possibilidade de tudo mudar" (48). Though the ex-history professor has long repressed his critical capabilities to survive under *O Esquema*, the defamiliarization of this intimate space suggests the possibility of radical change.

The protagonist's trek with Tadeu to São Paulo's devastated periphery redirects this inchoate sensation towards social dreaming. As the two pass through a labyrinthine series of tunnels where climate refugees hide from the dreaded police, Souza recognizes his new capacity for utopian thinking:

> Redescubro São Paulo. Não a minha. Minha. Que ridículo. Como se eu tivesse alguma. Ao dizer minha, prendo-me ao passado, refugio-me no inexistente. Caio no vácuo, daí a insegurança. Encontro uma nova cidade, estranha, que apresenta a todo instante novas propostas de vida. . . É dar ou pegar. Refazer todos conceitos. Colocar de lado a lamentação. Incluir-me dentro do novo conceito. (117)

The protagonist's decision to abandon his prescribed routine parallels the inventiveness of de Certeau's tactics and reflects his rediscovered ability to engage critically with his surroundings. As he encounters the even more degraded periphery, Souza breaks through his long malaise. Instead of purely reactive dystopian thinking, however, he begins to proactively consider alternative visions of the megacity.

Later in the same journey, Brandão juxtaposes this desire to engage with utopianism with the protagonist's previous parroting of *O Esquema*'s propaganda. As Souza and Tadeu enter the "Região do grande Lixo Plástico," the protagonist describes his ideological inculcation:

> Hoje a população está convencida. Mas o Esquema mantém o sistema de persuasão em estado latente. As campanhas foram iniciativa das agências de publicidade para ganharem favores governamentais. Programas na televisão, curta-metragens nos cinemas, slogans na Rádio Geral. Envolventes, sufocantes.
>
> Vivento intoxicados, abordados por todos os lados. Pelo ar e com os métodos de insinuação, não mais sutis, com que nos bombardeiam. Dopados. Quantas vezes me vi automaticamente defender o Esquema. E então me surpreendia com o desdobramento inexplicável que se produzia em mim. (123)

This recollection contrasts starkly with Souza's new impulse towards imagination. The totalitarian nature of *O Esquema* leaves little possibility of contestation. Though Souza once had enough hope to send his young son into exile, he since resigned himself to a lifetime of acritical submission. Still, direct observation of the dystopian landscapes of the megalopolis's outskirts reveal his latent desire to engage with ideological critique and social dreaming.

The conflict between possibility and anti-utopian consensus reaches its climax as Souza arrives at the *Marquises Extensas*. In the pages prior, the protagonist repeatedly encounters ads for these supposedly grandiose structures. First, as he rides in a police van towards the outer wall of the "Superquadra Climatizada" that houses the city's elite, Souza reads the following on various billboards: "*O Esquema Solucionou o Problema de Abrigos. Pronta Entrega das*

Marquises Extensas. . . . O trabalho liberta" (291).[167] Arriving in the devastated peripherical community of Chora Menino, he observes men holding signs describing the *Marquises* as, "A GRANDE SOLUÇÃO PARA OS DIAS DE CALOR" (311). Despite these repeated, implicit associations with Nazism and his prior self-critique, Souza admits belief in *O Esquema*'s propaganda: "Imaginava mesmo que as Marquises Extensas fossem uma utopia inventada pelo Esquema, a fim de levar o povo na conversa por mais tempo. Para manter a esperança" (318). After arriving at the *Marquises*, however, he again realizes the regime has appropriated utopian myths to subjugate São Paulo's population. This supposed solution to ecological catastrophe is no more than a massive roof that blocks direct contact with the sun's fatal rays. Though disillusioned with the abject reality of this concentration camp, Souza remains committed to inventing possible solutions rather than retreating into further conformity.

At first, Souza's utopianism remains theoretical. A renewed emphasis on the hole in his hand, however, precedes a surprising turn towards action. First, Souza encounters his nephew, a military captain and smuggler. As the two converse across an open space, the younger man admits his only objective as a member of *O Esquema* was self-enrichment and the guarantee of material comfort (348). This acknowledgement of the greed motivating the regime's collaborators coincides with the arrival of a second, unnamed man with a hole in his palm (348). When Souza realizes his own perforation has disappeared, he first questions if it existed at all. Ultimately, he decides that his new commitment to utopian thinking makes the puncture's existence irrelevant: "Criei-o à força, para me agarrar a algum motivo, a fim de modificar, encarar o mundo. Muleta? E daí? Prefiro andar de muletas que ficar parado na esquina como um

[167] The irony of an all-elite *superquadra* serves as an interesting grace note for those familiar with these structures' premature privatization in Brasília.

tonto inútil" (351). Having moved past his initial resignation, the protagonist no longer needs this symbol of defamiliarization to maintain engagement with utopian aspiration.

The next morning, the unnamed man approaches Souza and urges him to help organize the abandoned subjects of the *Marquises* for escape. Though initially hesitant, the protagonist reaches an unexpected conclusion: "Eu, o teórico, tenho que ir à prática" (354). Having engaged with dystopian thought, ideological critique, and amorphous utopianism throughout his journey through the novel's hellish São Paulo, Souza cannot return to a life of cynical conformity. *Não verás* concludes before any action takes place, yet the final paragraphs portend well for his liberating mission. As the men conclude their conversation, the smell of impending rain arrives at the *Marquises Extensas* (355). Souza's description of this potential environmental renewal parallels his newfound certainty in the power of utopian thought: "Não dormi, fiquei alerta, elétrico à espera dessa chuva prometida. Era certeza que viria. Mais hora, menos hora. Viria. Pode ser que estivesse ainda longe, mas caminhava em nossa direção" (355-356). There is no guarantee that collective action will reshape the scorched and segregated megalopolis, yet the unexpected sense of hopefulness in these final pages underscores the need for radical utopianism in the face of crisis.

The fictional São Paulo of *Não verás* functions as an allegory for contemporary society in the megacity and throughout Brazil. Souza's trajectory from resignation to the precipice of revolutionary action, however, finds few parallels in recent history. São Paulo's *doxa*, including belief in progress and profit, remain deeply entrenched. In fact, the liberal, capitalist ethos typical of the city's elite since the early twentieth century now closely mirrors the broad, international ideological consensus of TINA. Given this intersection between hegemonic ideology at the local, national, and global levels, perceiving the possibility of alternatives becomes an immense

challenge. Still, Brandão's novel illustrates how dystopian aesthetics in service of ideological critique might spark a turn towards positive, proactive social dreaming.

Learning Solidarity in *Ninguém é inocente em São Paulo* (2006)

The themes of violence, segregation, and authoritarianism in São Paulo unite the work of Ignácio de Loyola Brandão and Ferréz.[168] Moreover, the pair share similarly multifaceted visions of utopianism that incorporate dystopian thinking and direct action. The quotidian subject matter of the short stories collected in Ferréz's *Ninguém é inocente em São Paulo* (2006) mark a major point of distinction from the allegorical aesthetic of *Não verás*. Still, both texts integrate ideological critique into their respective critical dystopian frameworks and affirm the necessity of praxis to reshape the status quo. The eighteen brief stories of *Ninguém* remain narratively disconnected, yet the author's consistent thematic foci facilitate critical synthesis. Closely held *doxa* undercut traditional dystopian thinking by justifying the poverty, exploitation, and violence of the collection's São Paulo. By adopting perspectives from the middle and lower classes in different stories, Ferréz successfully evokes multiple angles of this conflict. While this dynamic makes social dreaming difficult, the author avoids adopting a fatalistic view of the megacity by embracing a post-utopian ethos focused on careful critique and local activism.

The cover of *Ninguém* immediately establishes the central themes of segregation and inequality. In a striking representation of what Caldeira famously termed the city of walls, Tuca

[168] Born Reginaldo Ferreira da Silva (1975-), the author, rapper, and activist known as Ferréz is a native of Capão Redondo in the extreme south of São Paulo. Ferréz shot to fame with the novel *Capão Pecado* (1999) before organizing *Caros Amigos/Literatura Marginal* in 2001. His subsequent novels and short story collections have largely maintained focus on violence and exploitation in São Paulo's periphery, with only his more spiritual third novel *Deus foi almoçar* (2012) breaking this mold. The author continues to reside in Capão Redondo, where he remains an important entrepreneur and activist ("Ferréz").

Vieira's well-known photo of Paraisópolis shows a *favela* separated from tennis courts and a large swimming pool by a concrete barrier. These leisure spaces belong to a pristine, white luxury apartment tower whose balconies each contain another swimming pool. Lush trees obscure the border wall and the underprivileged community beyond. In contrast, the *favela* itself is almost entirely devoid of greenery. While the symbolism of the image is blatant, the design by Joca Terron duplicates the photo, presenting the photograph upside-down on the upper half of the cover. This inverted layout reaffirms the theme of social and geographical division and foreshadows the importance of perspective in the stories to come.

The collection's opening story, "Fábrica de fazer vilão," immediately immerses the reader into the violent dynamics of São Paulo's periphery while presaging the limited impact of dystopian thinking in *Ninguém*. In just over two pages of short, profane, slang-filled sentences, a young rapper narrates a case of racialized abuse by police. The narrator's mother awakens him late at night before officers terrorize the pair in the bar that they own. The policemen mock the pair for their race and their poverty, calling them "macaca," "macaco," "lixo," and "vagabundo" (13). The police captain eventually orders his subordinates to turn off the lights in the bar, promising to shoot at random. When the lights come up, however, the family discovers that the policeman has fired into the roof (14).

Despite this nonviolent twist ending, the open authoritarianism of "Fábrica de fazer vilão" exemplifies the confrontational approach of what João César de Castro Rocha calls the "dialética da marginalidade" (41). For the critic, contemporary Brazilian authors from marginalized communities have departed from the conciliatory messaging typical of earlier generations and instead prioritized "[a] exposição da violência em vez de sua ocultação," to "converter a violência cotidiana em força simbólica, por intermédio de uma produção cultural

vista como modelo de organização comunitária" (Rocha 41, 58). Indeed, the abject helplessness of "Fábrica de fazer vilão" offers no indication of how a middle-class reader might ameliorate the quotidian hostility of the periphery. Instead, the author hints at the utopian possibility of peripherical cultural production as the narrator considers speaking out against his tormentors: "Eu canto rap, devia responder a ele nessas horas, falar de revolução, falar da divisão errada no país, falar do preconceito, mas..." (13). The young man's decision to remain silent reaffirms the limited short-term impact of such aspiration. Still, other stories contained in *Ninguém* illustrate Ferréz's belief that peripherical art can teach ideological critique and encourage utopian thinking.

Whereas the marginalized protagonist of "Fábrica de fazer vilão" experiences brutality firsthand and represses his urge to speak out, the bourgeois narrator of "Pegou um axé" reveals how internalized prejudice against the poor predisposes outsiders against residents of the periphery. The story's central figure is a journalist visiting a *favela* to interview a local hip-hop group. Though he is ostensibly interested in cultural capital, the unnamed narrator quickly reveals an obsession with money by praising his own status as a breadwinner (57-58). He perceives the rappers through the same lens, saying, "Falta de dinheiro deve gerar uma deprê neles do caralho. Por isso eles também usam tanta droga. Vai ver o pai deles não trabalhou que nem o meu. Fiquei sabendo que eles ficam só bebendo e jogando bola" (59). Though he rarely interacts with inhabitants of marginalized communities, the protagonist's ideological association of wealth with morality preconditions him to assume the poor deserve their fate. Shortly thereafter, however, the character reveals keen awareness of the institutional nature of inequality:

> E no final esse pessoal do hip-hop acha que pode mudar as coisas.
>
> Não podem nem pagar a pensão pros filhos e querem mudar alguma coisa.

E esse negócio de sistema, de jogo.

Um dia eles acordam e notam que a coisa é assim mesmo. Pra uns terem muito, a maioria tem que se fuder sem nada.[169] (59-60)

The narrator's cynicism is overt. He accepts dire poverty and extreme inequality as natural conditions of an immutable system and thus fails to acknowledge the possibility of alternative social forms. Though he understands the utopian aims of peripherical hip-hop, he completely disregards its validity as an instrument of change.

The unnamed narrator's predetermined vision of the *favela* as inherently criminal and inescapably impoverished curtails his ability to learn from what he sees and hears while in the community. He hardly listens to the rappers, interested only in their thoughts on violence (60). When the journalist sees men with knives and a saw in the bar where he conducts the interview, he immediately assumes they are dismembering a body. He is so affected by his presumptions that he faints, only to wake up and discover that the men were, in fact, butchering a cow purchased jointly by the community (65). The imagined violence of "Pegou um axé" contrasts with the terror imposed by the police in "Fábrica de fazer vilão," yet both stories suggest the limitations of conventional dystopian thought about the periphery. On the one hand, the constant possibility of violent oppression leads marginalized citizens to silence themselves. On the other, the journalist's cynicism and fear reveal a deeply ingrained predisposition against the periphery and its citizens grounded in a dogmatic association of poverty with immorality.

[169] In long quotations from *Ninguém*, I maintain the lack of indentation at the beginning of paragraphs that connotes a sense of direct expression in the text.

In “O Plano,” Ferréz further considers the influence of ideology through the lens of observations and self-reflection.[170] The story takes the form of an internal monologue by a working-class *paulistano* returning home to the periphery by bus. As they traverse São Paulo, the narrator outlines a pessimistic view of the city’s *doxa*. Early in the story, the commuter foreshadows their critique by employing a term familiar to readers of Loyola Brandão: “O esquema tá mil grau, meia-noite pego o ônibus, mó viagem de rolê pra voltar, o trampo nem cansa muito, o que mais condena o trabalhador é o transporte coletivo” (15). Beyond creating a point of connection with *Não verás*, Ferréz’s use of “esquema” implies the deceptive nature of the ideology undergirding São Paulo’s status quo. For Andressa Marques Pinto, the story’s early images of resignation and poverty reveal the success of the titular plan: “Esse contexto de segregação e falta de reflexão apresentam-se como cenário ideal para o funcionamento do plano, que além do mais, conta com a cordialidade, explicitada” (3196). This impulse towards cordiality represents the acceptance of domination and the hope that, through politeness towards the rich and powerful, one might earn some degree of social ascension. This conformity, though, only reinforces preexisting inequality. Ferréz introduces the collection’s title to decry the collective fatalism allowing poverty and violence to continue unchallenged:

> NINGUÉM É INOCENTE EM SÃO PAULO.
>
> Somos culpados.
>
> Culpados. Culpados também.
>
> O mundo em guerra e a revista *Época* põe o Bambam do *Big Brother* na capa, mas que porra de país é este? O mesmo país que se dizima com armas de fogo e as mantém pelo referendo. Ah! É verdade, o plano funciona. (16)

[170] “O plano” was first published in *Caros Amigos* before its inclusion in *Ninguém*.

The media plays a large role in distracting from the possibility of social criticism and political action. Still, the peripherical narrator also assumes their own complicity. While painful, such self-reflection is fundamental for any meaningful ideological critique.

In subsequent paragraphs, Ferréz further underlines the pernicious effects of this internalized ideology. Though the narrator recognizes the harmful nature of their predispositions against the poor, their immediate reaction upon encountering a "maluco" is disgust:

> Tô no buzão ainda e um maluco me encara, vai se foder, você é meu espelho, não vou quebrar meu reflexo, mas a maioria quebra, faz o que o sistema quer.
>
> Quem gera preconceito é só quem tem poder, um sem o outro não existe, o ônibus balança que só a porra, tenho até desgosto de continuar a escrever, mas comigo o plano não funciona. (17)

The narrator's instinctive prejudice reveals that even São Paulo's marginalized residents associate poverty with immorality. Still, engagement with ideological critique allows the passenger to recognize the fallacy of their intolerance. Resisting São Paulo's liberal, capitalist ethos is no easy task given the city's deep-seated identity and mythology. Still, this passage offers hope that unflinching critical engagement can precipitate a break from fatalistic conformity.

The antepenultimate text, "Assunto de família," illustrates the author's belief that such critique can form the basis of post-utopian thought and action. This story takes the form of a letter from a fictionalized Ferréz to his father and employs long paragraphs (relative to *Ninguém*'s other stories) to outline the author's thoughts on various topics. Ferréz's extensive engagement with social and ideological critique is obvious as he suggests that capitalism, religion, and colonialism have acted in concert to define poverty as both moral defect and sign of

piety (84-85). Although this confluence of systems he views as exploitative remains entrenched, Ferréz identifies various figures from whom he draws inspiration. The first such group are historical, Brazilian revolutionaries like Antônio Conselheiro, Tiradentes, and Zumbi. The other source are writers like Plínio Marcos and João Antônio who pioneered the literary representation of marginalized communities in São Paulo (80-81). Now, Ferréz hopes to use his status as a successful author to spread awareness of these figures and their respective aspirations and social critiques.

This belief in the didactic power of literature is a fundamental aspect of the author's post-utopianism. In fact, Ferréz describes how his father's similar emphasis on education formed the basis of his own critical consciousness:

> Sabe Pai, tem uns caras que tão me ajudando nessa revolução que tanto quero, eles acreditam em um mundo melhor, um mundo como o senhor sempre falou pra mim, um mundo de educação e estudo, o senhor batia nessa tecla, e está funcionando, tudo que tenho devo ao estudo, aprendi que nós nascemos devendo várias dólares para os americanos, e nossos artistas não representam a revolta de um povo, que merecia melhores representantes, às vezes acordo desanimado e quase acredito no que o sistema diz, mas aí logo saio pra calçada e começo a observar... (80)

Despite experiencing occasional disillusionment, the author retains a baseline of belief that a better world is possible. This fictionalized Ferréz ponders political violence as a tool for revolutionary change yet ultimately remains committed to education as a medium for cultivating critical, post-utopian thinking. By visiting peripherical schools and performing in hip-hop shows, the author hopes to inspire a new generation of social dreamers: "Continuo andando Pai, e por isso nunca mais deu tempo pra gente se falar, eu continuo de escola em escola, de entidade em

entidade, de show em show, tentando espalhar informação, tentando cultivar o prazer de ler e de buscar algo melhor" (81).[171] Ferréz does not explicitly elucidate what a better society might look like, but "Assunto de família" employs autobiography to describe his tireless efforts to disseminate his own learnings through literature, classroom visits, and music. This social and political engagement demonstrates the author's belief that post-utopian thinking and action can improve life for São Paulo's marginalized citizens.

The path towards post-utopian imagination is tortuous for the self-loathing residents of *Ninguém*'s fractured São Paulo. Both middle-class and marginalized characters describe reflexive distrust and anger towards the poor, revealing the close association between wealth and virtue in the cosmopolitan, modern megacity. At the same time, the geographical divisions separating these groups allow few opportunities for direct, inter-class interaction. Despite these material and ideological obstacles, Ferréz illustrates belief that the city's peripherical working-class can improve their own lot and offers his autobiography and fiction as a possible guide. No solidarity is possible without the difficult first step of unflinching critique of society and oneself. Those willing to confront their own prejudices and learn from role models (be they from history, literature, music, or one's own family), however, can meaningfully strive for a better future even without a radical utopian vision.

[171] Ferréz's activism in Capão Redondo confirms the autobiographical nature of this passage. His consistent collaboration with other writers and musicians is a hallmark of his work as an organizer of the Literatura Periférica movement. Further, the author co-founded Editora Selo Povo in 2008 and the NGO Interferência in 2009. The small publisher prints affordable texts by peripherical authors alongside works of social criticism. Interferência, co-founded with Paulo Freire disciple Tia Dag, offers supplemental cultural and artistic education for students in Capão Redondo.

Reliving Trauma and Reclaiming Hope in *Sob os pés, meu corpo inteiro* (2018)

Philosopher and novelist Márcia Tiburi's *Sob os pés, meu corpo inteiro* (2018) takes place in an authoritarian, ecologically devastated São Paulo that immediately recalls the dystopian city of *Não verás*.[172] While the violent legacy of the military dictatorship is a central theme in both works, Tiburi sets her novel in a version of the city only lightly estranged from its reality at the time of publication. *Sob os pés* largely dispenses with allegory to focus on the memories and observations of the protagonist as she struggles to confront past trauma in the amnesic megacity. Though she has long isolated herself in the wake of her sister's death at the hands of military torturers, Lúcia at last finds the impetus to engage with dystopian thinking about the time since her own imprisonment. Although she commits to working towards a brighter future by the novel's end, her decision to leave São Paulo behind creates ambiguity about the possibility of redeeming the polluted and violent megacity.

Tiburi structures the novel around painful memories, staging an intricately planned series of revelations that repeatedly recontextualize the characters' relationships. After decades in exile, Lúcia (née Alice de Souza) has only recently returned to her native São Paulo.[173] She remains haunted by the death of her charming, politically active sister Adriana while a captive of the dictatorship and by her own extended incarceration, repeated rape, and the murder of a baby she conceives in prison. Only after fleeing to Portugal and living with Adriana's ex-comrade Manoel

[172] Born in Rio Grande do Sul, Márcia Tiburi has published philosophical works on feminism, politics, and the media. She is also the author of six novels, the first three of which comprise the *Trilogia Íntima*. Though previously a longtime resident of São Paulo, Tiburi became the PT's candidate for Governor of Rio de Janeiro in 2018. After facing harassment and threats from members of the far right and losing in the first round of voting, she left Brazil and is residing in the United States at the time of writing (Mendonça).

[173] I use the name "Lúcia" to refer to the period after the protagonist assumes this name and "Alice" when referencing the period before she enters into exile.

does Alice adopt the name Lúcia, in part because the regime confused her identity with her sister's. Manoel and Lúcia share an extended, loveless partnership in Europe before returning to São Paulo. Shortly after their arrival, Manoel, sick with lung cancer, commits suicide.

In the opening chapter, Lúcia meets Betina, a young woman who introduces herself as Alice's daughter. Shocked, the protagonist presents herself as a childhood friend of Adriana and Alice while considering whether to share her identity with Betina. Though Lúcia convinces herself that she is the young woman's mother, she eventually discovers that Manoel was a double agent who fathered a child with Adriana prior to her death. In the meantime, Betina must abandon São Paulo due to unspecified persecution by the city's authoritarian government. Despite her awareness that Lúcia is deceiving her, she leaves her young son João in the older woman's care. In the novel's final pages, the protagonist at last realizes Manoel's deception and commits to leaving São Paulo with João in search of her niece.

The inside cover of *Sob os pés* immediately emphasizes the work's dystopian aesthetics. This peratextual passage begins with eight words written in bold, black type, "Em uma São Paulo distópica, mas perigosamente familiar…," while the full text alludes to the novel's intersecting portrait of ecological decay and authoritarian violence: "em meio a uma cidade apodrecida . . . em que a insegurança, a crise hídrica, os golpes de Estado e uma elite política carcomida . . . são o retrato do que se construiu a partir do fim das utopias." Although this phrasing implicitly associates dystopia with the absence of utopia, the description in fact closely foreshadows Tiburi's portrait of post-utopian engagement. Lúcia initially accepts her life in the drought-ridden, polluted city as an appropriate punishment for her supposed sins, but her growing attachment to Betina and João leads her to revisit her repressed trauma to forge a better future.

Tiburi introduces the tension between remembrance and São Paulo's "clima geral de demência" by opening the novel in a heterotopia *par excellence*: the Cemitério do Araçá in Pacaembu (10). Lúcia's visit to Adriana's grave leads her to Betina and, eventually, the series of memories that ignite her tentative return to hopefulness. Having repressed her past and resigned herself to permanent unhappiness as Manoel's de facto wife, Lúcia is initially dubious that revisiting her painful past will bring resolution: "[Betina] me lembra o que não quero lembrar, os tempos da ditadura e os tempos que a antecederam quando eu era outra pessoa, alguém com quem tento entrar em contato agora sem saber se isso será possível" (23). The protagonist's intentional rejection of her trauma allows her to superficially move past her trauma yet prevents a critically grounded approach to past, present, or future. By retracing the events that led her to intentionally disengage with her youth, "tornar banal a vida," and disavow the possibility of positive change, Lúcia sets the stage for her turn to post-utopian reengagement (10).

The protagonist's most painful memories center on her serial rape and extended torture while imprisoned at the DOI-CODI (Departamento de Operações de Informações de Defesa Interna) intelligence agency headquarters. This direct contact with the most repressive agents of the military dictatorship in São Paulo triggers the protagonist's disassociation from her past as she feels "apagada para sempre da história" (76). To survive in the wake of this dehumanization and violation, Lúcia makes a drastic decision as she enters into exile: "Esquecer para sobreviver, essa foi e ainda é minha decisão. Não era bondade de minha parte, tampouco era ingenuidade deixar as coisas assim" (84). With her memories too painful to bear, intentional oblivion becomes a logical survival tactic. Still, Lúcia's return to São Paulo catalyzes an unexpected and long-delayed renegotiation of this trauma.

Lúcia's intentionally amnesic self-preservation tactics disconnect her from utopian aspiration. Tiburi introduces the character's nihilism early in the novel as she glimpses a pregnant woman: "Eu me pergunto por que estará gravida em uma época como essa quando já não se pode convidar ninguém a participar desse mundo" (10). This anti-utopianism is rooted in her imprisonment, during which time she describes her imagination and ability to reason being neutralized (149). As she belatedly revisits this period, the character envisions herself in an inescapable corridor, describing the place as "Um limbo no qual devo permanecer inteira mesmo que despedaçada, um lugar em que a esperança de sair é a obrigação maior de todas enquanto, ao mesmo tempo, sei que não há saída e que, mesmo se eu sobreviver a isso, será apenas de um modo parcial" (98). No longer able to envision alternative futures and unwilling to consider her past, Lúcia confines herself to the present in a decision that parallels Almino's theory of *instantaneísmo* in *As cinco estações*. Resigned to a permanent stagnation, the character apathetically tolerates an unending succession of instants during decades of exile.

As the protagonist revisits her suppressed memories, however, she finds new reason to believe in the possibility of a better future. Among Lúcia's previously forgotten recollections is Adriana's childhood urge to run away to Cappadocia in search of "[u]ma utopia" (37). Though she was dubious at the time, asking practical questions that belittled her sister's impulse towards imagination, Alice drew inspiration from this hopeful yearning during her imprisonment. Through her months of torture and rape, the word "Capadócia" provided solace, reminding her of the possibility of "um lugar que, mesmo não existindo, certamente seria melhor do que aquilo que podíamos conhecer" (37). This explicit example of thinking about utopia provides a rare moment of consolation during months of confinement. By intentionally forgetting her past, however, Lúcia severs this connection with utopianism for decades. As the protagonist at last

engages with her past, she belatedly recalls the inspirational power of utopian thought. Whereas she once accepted her erasure from history, she now declares that, "ser vítima da história me entristece. Que tudo poderia ter sido diferente e que não há nada mais doloroso do que olhar para esse passado vazio. Volto a dizer que gostaria de mudar o destino" (109). While this desire to strive for a better future remains inchoate until the conclusion of *Sob os pés*, this declaration neatly exemplifies utopianism's essential impulse.

Lúcia's response to the tragic revelation of Manoel's extended betrayal demonstrates newfound capacity to convert this dormant belief into post-utopian action. Having spent the novel critically analyzing her repressed trauma, the protagonist quickly identifies her own complicity in Manoel's deception: "Então penso que estive com Manoel até o fim porque desisti desde o começo . . . tomo sua morte como parte essencial do que posso hoje chamar de liberdade" (178). Lúcia disavows her previous fatalism, committing to learn from past mistakes and strive for a better future. This conversion of past trauma into constructive action neatly exemplifies Tiburi's vision of productive hope. In a column titled "Sobre a esperança," the author argues uncritical hope shares little in common with the goals of utopian thinking: "a esperança não pode ser naturalizada . . . vejo um perigo imenso na esperança não pensada, na esperança sem reflexão." Lúcia's hopefulness, on the other hand, draws from reflections on her prior resignation. Having examined the reasons for and effects of her former anti-utopianism, the protagonist remains optimistic despite the shock of her ex-partner's deception.

Unlike this trajectory towards renewed aspiration, the novel's ecological dystopia lacks any apparent resolution. Still, the recurrent images of environmental decay create a bridge between Lúcia's return to hopefulness and a wider critique of the mythologized progress central to São Paulo's identity since the early twentieth century. In a presentation at the University of

California, Los Angeles, titled "Utopias and Dystopias in Contemporary Brazil," Tiburi tied the novel's ecological degradation to official ambivalence about climate in São Paulo as exemplified by the megacity's outdated water supply system that depends largely on rainwater. On the one hand, Lúcia's vision of the weather mirrors her overarching perspective on the city as she regains hope for the future. On the other, Tiburi's depiction of the environment coincides with a subtle (especially compared to *Não verás* and *Ninguém*) yet unmistakable critique of the capitalist ideology underpinning the prioritization of symbols of progress above preservation.

Though the protagonist begins the novel resigned to slowly degrading alongside the polluted megacity, her newfound critical impulse leads her to express hope for environmental renewal by the work's conclusion. As in *Não verás*, the possibility of rain symbolizes a break from disillusionment and despair. When Lúcia first meets Betina, a fine, misting rain begins to fall. This unexpected precipitation leads the two women to shield themselves under Betina's umbrella, an object she carries "para não perder a esperança" (17). As Betina runs to catch a metro train, she leaves the umbrella with her aunt, leading the older woman to reflect that "Betina e a chuva são minhas esperas" as the second chapter opens (19). Though the city's years-long drought continues, Lúcia affirms belief that rain will shortly arrive towards the conclusion of *Sob os pés*: "João me pergunta se um dia irá chover. Digo que há de chover, senão estaremos mortos" (167). Despite her initial disbelief in the possibility of environmental or personal renewal, Lúcia expresses faith in a better future by the novel's end as she realizes that continued resignation only perpetuates her prior hopelessness.

For most of *Sob os pés,* São Paulo's state of decay appears to be evidence supporting Lúcia's nihilistic worldview. For Jade Bueno Arbo, "a decadência da cidade [é] tanto um reflexo externo da apatia e aridez interna de Alice como sua perpetuadora, potencializadora de seu

isolamento" (142). The city, constantly repainted gray by its psychopathic mayor, leaves little space for artistic expression or critical reflection on the past (16). This chromatic symbol of the impossibility of a creative right to the city mirrors the false tabula rasa of Lúcia's memory after her exile. Moreover, the city's thick smog blends with this unending grayness to suggest the inalterable nature of the status quo: "Aberturas falsas mostram um horizonte falso em que não se distinguem céu e chão. À frente, a cidade opressa entre paredes infinitas é um labirinto do qual não se pode fugir senão para entrar em outro" (142). Though able to perceive the oppressive nature of this urbanism, Lúcia sees no possibility of improvement. A resigned witness to the megacity's decline, she drinks poisoned tap water, inhales pollution on long walks, and embraces self-imposed isolation.

This initial conformity likewise extends to the capitalist ideology Tiburi illustrates as a root cause of São Paulo's environmental degradation. In one passage, Lúcia plainly outlines the connection between her torture, extractivism, and the megacity's extreme income inequality:

> Acostumados a fazer isso com rios e mares, com florestas inteiras, com cidades inteiras, os donos do mundo treinam o horror em cada corpo. Vivem em seus helicópteros sobrevoando uma cidade cuja população eles matam sem que tenham que sujar as mãos. As pessoas são torturadas a cada minuto sem ter o que comer, como cuidar de si, sem ter o que esperar, o seu desejo tendo sido aniquilado. (95).

For the city's elite, authoritarianism, poverty, deforestation, and pollution are inconsequential side effects of the virtuous search for progress and profit. While the highest echelons of society float above São Paulo's smog in private helicopters, the masses grow to accept their domination and ecological decay as natural phenomena.

The theme of capitalism is also central to Lúcia's discussions with Antonio, a male prostitute from Pará. In a conversation with the younger man, Lúcia affirms belief that, "Estamos no núcleo perverso do capitalismo brasileiro . . . O coração gangrenado do capitalismo pulsa. Estamos no meio de uma de suas feridas. O corpo do planeta em feridas" (104). Despite employing overtly dystopian imagery, the protagonist remains resigned to her role within this pre-existing system. Lúcia's exploitation of Antonio is relatively benevolent, but her re-engagement with utopianism involves cutting ties with the sex worker as she rejects her previous conformity. This decision symbolizes the protagonist's belated decision to act on her prior ideological critique. A true believer in São Paulo's promises of modernity and wealth despite his impoverished status, Antonio rejects Lúcia's analysis and labels her a communist who propagates "moralismo ideológico" (104). Although he correctly identifies her initial insincerity, the young man's reflexive defense of inequality reveals his resistance to ideological critique. Lúcia's decision to distance herself from Antonio and his blinkered worldview represents her new commitment to post-utopian aspiration. At the same time, however, her disinterest in convincing the young man to do the same and her flight from São Paulo reveal the extremely limited scope of the protagonist's social dreams.

While Lúcia's cautious embrace of hopefulness is undeniable, her decision to abandon São Paulo leaves major doubts about the city's future. Though the protagonist suggests newfound commitment to her longstanding critique of capitalist excess, little hope remains for society beyond the character's immediate family. "Sobre a esperança" offers insight into this latent pessimism as Tiburi suggests that hope becomes degraded societies as rapaciously capitalist as that of the novel's São Paulo:

> A esperança é um conceito fundamental, mas assim como aconteceu com diversos conceitos ela também foi capturada para os fins do poder. Dos interesses do capital. As teologias que reduzem a esperança à prosperidade, as práticas capitalistas que reduzem a esperança a um estilo de vida baseado em consumo e produtividade para mais consumo, humilham a esperança.

This phenomenon is not unique to the megacity, yet it does suggest the limited effectiveness of individual hopefulness in such a place. Lúcia's trajectory from blinkered disillusionment to critical engagement with past and future should not be discounted, yet her choice to reunite with Betina and leave São Paulo behind implies the futility of social dreaming in the megalopolis. Given the decaying state of the surrounding environment and decades of authoritarian rule, there is little chance of structural reform before the city's seemingly inevitable collapse. And yet, if Lúcia can accept her trauma and learn to aspire anew, some degree of hope remains for São Paulo.

Faith in a Fractured City: *Eles eram muitos cavalos* (2001)

Among the best-known and most studied contemporary literary depictions of São Paulo, Luiz Ruffato's *Eles eram muitos cavalos* (2001) [*EEMC*] comprises 69 unrelated sections depicting the megacity on Tuesday, May 9th, 2000.[174] Most of the work's segments approximate short stories, yet several consist of non-narrative texts (a radio weather report, a horoscope, job

[174] Luiz Ruffato (1961-) grew up the son of working-class immigrants in Cataguases, Minas Gerais. After studying journalism in Juiz de Fora, MG, Ruffato moved to São Paulo in 1990. Shortly after the success of *Eles eram muitos cavalos*, he dedicated himself full time to literature. Alongside his first novel, Ruffato is best known for the five novel series *Inferno provisório* (2005-2011) that traces the Brazilian working class from the 1950s until the early twenty-first century. To date, he has published eight novels, two collections of poetry, three short story collections and organized several anthologies ("Luiz Ruffato").

listings, a baptism certificate, advertisements for sex, and a restaurant menu). Stream-of-consciousness narration, informal language, and inconsistent punctuation recur among the various sections, yet Ruffato's style remains chameleonic throughout. Frequent italicization, the incorporation of multiple fonts, and two blacked-out pages prior to the final fragment serve as visual symbols of the social atomization connecting *EEMC*'s subsections. For Marguerite Itamar Harrison, this graphic and stylistic inconsistency pair with the unrelated nature of the novel's respective narratives to forge an "atmosphere of alienation" (152-3).[175] Understood alternatingly as social disconnect, geographical isolation, and the exploitation of labor under capitalism, alienation is the defining feature of Ruffato's simultaneously kaleidoscopic and panoramic vision of the megalopolis. Still, as illustrated by analysis of relevant fragments, many of the novel's most marginalized characters remain unexpectedly hopeful despite these material and cultural barriers to success. These working-class aspirations at times draw from targeted social and ideological critique yet also appear in the form of an inherent, inextinguishable impulse towards disalienation. This resilient faith in a brighter future, though, exists in tension with the fatalistic anti-utopianism of a local elite and middle class fully indoctrinated into TINA.

The novel's 47th fragment, "O 'Crânio,'" is the section that best synthesizes this dynamic. The narrative's unnamed narrator is a young Afro-Brazilian man from the city's Southern Zone who is involved in drug trafficking. The titular character is his younger brother, so nicknamed for his intellect and voracious appetite for reading. Like Ferréz, Ruffato incorporates the informal, vulgar speech patterns typical of the periphery to give voice to these marginalized characters. For Karl Erik Schøllhammer, the freely flowing rhythm and approximation with

[175] Following Ruffato, I refer to *EEMC* as a novel "para simplificar" (in R. Gomes, "Móbiles urbanos," 136).

orality typical of this section and others exemplify "produção performática . . . que ultrapassa a ilusão referencial do realismo" ("Fragmentos" 69). Ruffato thus draws attention to the use of language and denaturalizes the process of reading: "dá visibilidade ao não visível e acentua os aspectos invisíveis da realidade demasiadamente visível e exposta – o sofrimento, a angústia, os medos e a violência. Na perspectiva de Jacques Rancière, trata-se aqui de uma simultânea politização da estética e estetização da política" (Schøllhammer, "Fragmentos" 70). The estrangement of literary language in *EEMC* redistributes patterns of visibility while stimulating further reflection about the social dynamics on display. In "O 'Crânio,'" this process incites dystopian thinking about the multiple forms of alienation that too often define daily life in the megalopolis.

Though only sixteen years old, Crânio has engaged deeply with critique of the liberal, capitalist *doxa* accepted as natural in São Paulo. Like the respective narrators of Ferréz's "O Plano" and "Assunto de família," the young man possesses rare insight into the socioeconomic dynamics upheld in part through this ideology:

> E o bacana da mansão do Morumbi
>
> Que controla de verdade a muamba
>
> Está lá cada vez mais rico filhos estudando no estrangeiro
>
> Carro importado blindado na porta segurança
>
> Mordomo babá jardineiro copeira cozinheira arrumadeira
>
> Os homens comprados na palma da mão
>
> E a gente feito mosca pousada na bosta
>
> Esperando a hora do pipoco feito formiga na fila do formigueiro. (101)

Alienated from the profits of their labor (be it legal or extralegal), *favela* residents remain impoverished and dehumanized. The protagonist's message of class-based solidarity strikes a chord with the narrator and his fellow traffickers: "o crânio é revoltado / por ele a gente pegava os trabucos ia fazer uma revolução / ele só acha certo assalto a banco a carro-forte / sequestro de milionário ocupação de terra e de casa sem dono" (101). Despite the clarity and applicability of this ideological critique, Crânio's full trajectory illustrates how prescribed uses of space and authoritarian violence combine to curtail revolutionary aspirations rooted in São Paulo's periphery.

Crânio's downfall occurs when police arrest and torture the young man at the entrance to the *favela* for not carrying identifying documents. This brutality reinforces the de Certeauian strategy segregating the city's poor described by Leila Lehnen: "a urbe divide-se cada vez mais em zonas separadas por fronteiras invisíveis, porém altamente demarcadas" (85). As befitting this urbanistic and socioeconomic stratification, São Paulo's *asfalto* is open only to *favela* residents commuting to work. The punishment for non-conformity is cruel if not unusual: "deixaram ele assim deitado humilhado a / comunidade inteira revoltada / depois jogaram ele no camburão e sumiram / por essa são paulo tão comprida / encheram ele de porrada torturaram / o crânio ficou mal..." (103). Although Crânio is fully aware of the material and ideological dynamics underpinning such violence, he nonetheless is impotent in the face of institutionalized segregation reinforced through brutal violence. As a result, the young man disengages from his radical utopian ambitions.

After his unjust arrest and torture, Crânio agrees to hide arms for his brother's gang, conforming with a system he knows is exploitative. In an ironic twist, however, the narrator confides to the reader that he is en route to murder the officers who assaulted his brother. While

the gangsters clearly took Crânio's message to heart, this plan of action further underscores the tenuousness of revolutionary aspiration in the *favela*. Instead of targeted robberies against the wealthy, the story ends with the promise of murderous retribution that will likely redouble violent enforcement of the status quo. This promise of continued, cyclical violence underscores the limitations of peripherical utopianism in *EEMC*. Even those enlightened by ideological critique remain subject to patterns of segregation, economic exploitation, and authoritarian violence.

Another chapter illustrating the barriers to working-class utopianism is the novel's forty-fifth, "Vista parcial da cidade." In contrast to the direct critique outlined in "O 'Crânio,'" this fragment depicts alienation as a quotidian process of conformity and exploitation. The narrative centers on a nameless young woman who endures extended, uncomfortable rides on public transport while commuting to work in a travel agency and attending a college preparation course. The story's opening lines, "são paulo relâmpagos / (são paulo é o lá-fora? é o aqui-dentro?)," foreshadow the dual processes of internalizing São Paulo's individualistic ethos and conforming with prescribed uses of space that lead the protagonist towards disillusionment (94). Even as the young woman's actions imply her belief in social ascension within the bounds of the status quo, Ruffato explicitly and implicitly conveys her growing hopelessness.

The fragment provides little insight into the protagonist's psychology. Still, the young woman's devotion to work and study demonstrate her acceptance of the city's myth of meritocracy. Despite her heroic efforts, Ruffato describes the difficulty of remaining hopeful when the young woman embraces her grandmother: "e migalhas de seus sonhos esparramaram-se sobre os ombros da velha" (95). The protagonist's growing resignation comes further into focus when Ruffato cleverly displaces the word "body" to interlace the fatigue and poverty that

dilute her aspirations: “cansado suado contas para pagar prestações o corpo” (95). The demands of working-class life in São Paulo are rigorous. Even for a young woman committed to pulling herself up by the bootstraps, the alienating rigors of commuting and work leave little reason to believe in a better future. Physically and emotionally exhausted, the protagonist has no energy left for critical thinking or social dreaming.

The section’s fragmented conclusion employs a performative aesthetic to communicate the sensation of fatigue during a long commute. Ruffato uses repetition and alliteration to further underline the exploitative dynamics causing the character’s fatigue:

> sacolejando pela Avenida Rebouças
> o farol abre e fecha
> carros e carros
> mendigos vendedores meninos meninas
> carros e carros
> assaltantes ladrões prostitutas traficantes
> carros e carros
> mais um dia
> terça-feira
> fim de semana longe
> as luzes dos postes dos carros dos painéis eletrônicos dos ônibus
> e tudo tem a cor cansada
> E os corpos mais cansados
> mais cansados

a batata das minhas pernas dói minha cabeça dói e. (96)

This inconclusive, poetic section conjures the cyclical, unending rhythm of working-class life in the megacity. The author's successful evocation of drifting off to sleep on a long bus ride implies the incompatibility of utopian thinking and exhaustion. Though the protagonist believes she can achieve a better future for herself and her family through hard work alone, "Vista parcial da cidade" demonstrates how São Paulo's prescribed uses of space and capitalist ethos undermine this unlikely sense of hopefulness.

Although optimistic by comparison, the novel's forty-first fragment, "Táxi," reaffirms the remaining optimistic for working-class *paulistanos*. This section consists of an extended monologue by the taxi driver Claudionor. An unnamed passenger listens but never speaks. Ruffato again achieves a performative aesthetic as the driver's compounding rhetorical questions and short pauses (represented by ellipses) approximate speech patterns. Still, Claudionor ultimately seeks to entertain and sell his services to the silent man he refers to as "doutor." This clear class division suggests the limitations of the taxi driver's aspirations. At the same time, Ruffato implicitly challenges the reader, who is most likely closer to the social status of the passenger, to empathize with the driver's travails.

Claudionor's summary of his life illustrates a (relatively) successful outcome of the resilient hopefulness visible in many of *EEMC*'s fragments. Nonetheless, the narrator admits pessimism about the future by the section's conclusion. The taxi driver has achieved a degree of upward mobility and financial stability impossible in his native Sergipe, leading him to declare, "São Paulo, uma mãe para mim" (87). His daughters have consolidated their middle-class status through marriage, while Claudionor continues to employ de Certeauian tactics to successfully navigate the gridlocked, segregated megalopolis: "Aqui em São Paulo nem sempre o caminho

mais curto é o mais rápido. A essa hora… cinco e quinze... a essa hora a cidade já está parando...” (85). For Nelson H. Vieira, the unlikely mobility described in “Táxi” represents an undercurrent of hope that contrasts with the baseline of alienation characterizing the novel’s São Paulo:

> …*EEMC* não é unicamente um texto sobre a injustiça social e um implacável sistema capitalista. Ao contrário, o texto de Ruffato demonstra como em alguns casos a reapropriação do espaço capitalista representa também uma manifestação da arte brasileira do ‘jeito’, mesmo dentro de uma miséria urbana que esmaga o indivíduo. Nestes instantes, vê-se que EEMC não é desprovido de esperança porque o leitor com uma perspectiva *up-close* assiste cenas em que o espaço material virá a ser um espaço ontológico evocando vidas, sentimentos, tragédias, sucessos, derrotas, e relações que perfila existências de sobrevivência por meio de modos inventivos de operar. (126)

Claudionor’s multiple re-inventions and defiance of prescribed uses of urban space represent the character’s successful post-utopian aspiration in the megacity. Nonetheless, the passenger’s silent presence serves as a reminder that this commitment to seeking marginal improvements fails to challenge the widespread exploitation of São Paulo’s working class.

Despite his own success, Claudionor admits losing faith in São Paulo’s promise of endless wealth and opportunity. Even his own gains were tenuous, as a robbery forced the retiree back into the workforce: “antigamente era assim, quem gostasse de trabalhar tinha tudo, ao contrário de hoje, que até dá pena, não tem emprego para ninguém. Eu mesmo, que tenho uns restos de idade pra gastar ainda, já aposentei, ainda tenho que pegar o bico à unha, porque ninguém valoriza velho” (87). After decades working in the megalopolis, Claudionor comes to perceive the immutable distribution of wealth in São Paulo. While those with luck or skill can

improve their lot, the alienation of labor prevents even the hardest workers from radically altering their social position or achieving lasting economic stability.

Ruffato's performative realism encourages identification between the reader and peripherical, working-class characters through informal language and dialogic structures. *EEMC*'s only incursion into the mind of a member of São Paulo's social elite, on the other hand, seeks to elicit disgust. In a stark contrast to the limited, unlikely aspirations that connect "O 'Crânio,'" "Vista parcial da cidade," and "Táxi," the wealthy protagonist of the sixteenth fragment, "assim:," describes São Paulo with open derision. Proving Crânio's prescience, the rich narrator travels in a private helicopter above the megalopolis. His ease of mobility diverges with the intense prescription of movement seen in the previously analyzed fragments and underscores the massive disparities in wealth and power typical of contemporary São Paulo. At the same time, Ruffato employs text in bold and italics, multiple fonts, and frequent parentheses to conjure the central character's consciousness. While brief, this glimpse into the mind of the local elite reveals the twisted nature of the *doxa* associating wealth with moral virtue.

In a seemingly unpremeditated stream of consciousness, the protagonist rapidly reveals a history of pedophilia, "(:chamariz a menina – mostra pra mim deixa eu ver não conto pra ninguém," barely concealed racism, "*são imigrantes são baianos mineiros nordestinos gente desenraizada sem amor à cidade para eles tanto*," and deep cynicism (36-37). This anonymous son of São Paulo's traditional elite views the city's poverty and wealth as completely unrelated, describing the impoverished city center with disgust and revealing pride in the skyscrapers that signify modernity, "fez é uma cidade magnífica os minaretes" (37). Denying any responsibility for this inequality, the man exemplifies anti-utopianism in his ungrammatical mockery of the myths that justify this divided status quo: "este é o país do futuro? Deus é brasileiro? Onde

ontem um manancial hoje uma favela onde ontem uma escola hoje uma cadeia onde ontem um prédio do começo do século hoje um três dormitórios suíte setenta metros quadrados" (37). This description reinforces dehumanizing stereotypes while ignoring the role of capitalist exploitation in exaggerating the poverty he derides. The character's cynicism becomes clearer still in the fragment's last line, "*precisaríamos reinventar uma civilização*," which employs the conditional tense to convey the purely hypothetical nature of radical utopianism for the novel's only character with the resources necessary to efficaciously enact social reform (37).

The chapters of *EEMC* centered on the middle class reveal similar fatalism about Brazil's future while foregrounding social alienation. The amoral arms dealer who protagonizes "Negócio" (fragment twenty-eight) justifies his cynical embrace of rapacious capitalism as necessary to avoid being left behind in a city constantly seeking progress: "Tanto sacrifício, no final não desse uma guinada, teria encarnado mais um, como seus pais, que Deus os tenha, e como provavelmente seus filhos: zés-ninguém" (62). Section fifty-seven, "Newark, Newark," depicts middle-class emigration as similarly pessimistic. Departing for the titular American city, José Geraldo reflects on his friend's advice that Brazil is hopelessly resigned to inequality: "povinho conformado, elite sacana, corrupção, politicalha, bandalheira, filhadaputice, corneagem, putaria…" (121). Other middle-class characters simply resign themselves to social decadence. Such is the case of the professor paralyzed by fear of crime in "O que quer uma mulher" (section ten), whose wife decries "*você não vê futuro meu amor porque você não tem futuro*" (25). Similarly, the biographies comprising "Nosso encontro" (fragment 63) reveal increasing social disengagement since the "Diretas já" campaign at the end of the dictatorship (131-136). These various representatives of the middle class either abandon their morals in search of profit or embrace to apolitical apathy.

Ironically, one narrative that defies this anti-utopian malaise otherwise embodies Rejane Cristina Rocha argument that *EEMC*'s São Paulo is a "lugar em que o capitalismo mostra sua face mais cruel e onde os preceitos do iluminismo já não têm mais lugar" (125). The twenty-ninth fragment, "Paraíso," centers on an unnamed, formerly homeless boy imprisoned in an apartment by a German man. Although narrated in the third person, the text approximates the perspective and speech patterns of the exploited protagonist. Foreign pornographers ply the boy with alcohol and drugs before filming him: "E quando adverte amanhã tem trabalho chega com uns amigos e umas mulheres e umas meninas, nem peito ainda, cheiram cocaína, bebem, arrancam as roupas, os gringos fotografam, filmam elas se roçando, se lambendo, o Alemão e o menino mandam brasa, revezam-se" (63). Threatened by the German and barred from any contact with the outside world, the protagonist reflects nostalgically on his childhood dodging police, gangsters, and drug addicts: "Ao menino não agrada muito, mas, se lembra de há dois meses, é como se o Paraíso" (63). This warping of homelessness into a desirable state reflects the skepticism about social dreaming visible in many of the novel's other fragments, yet the protagonist of "Paraíso" refuses nihilism. In an unlikely twist, Ruffato reveals the child's ongoing belief that he will achieve his dream of becoming a DJ and has already planned his escape (63-64). This aspiration illustrates the atomization undercutting broader social dreaming yet likewise confirms the impressive resilience of hope in the megacity.

The utopian impulse visible in fragments like "Paraíso" and "Táxi" exists in a state of equilibrium with the anti-utopianism that defines the perspectives of São Paulo's upper and middle classes in *EEMC*. Despite these frequent illustrations of nihilism, the irrepressible hopefulness of the working class join with moments of ideological critique to define the work as

dystopian rather than fatalistic. For Renato Cordeiro Gomes, *EEMC* seeks to convey the existence of alternatives to the abject city on display in his novel:

> *EEMC* trabalha uma realidade distópica, o mundo desencantado, gasto, esfacelando, em que os sujeitos se esfacelam . . .[mas] Como diz Ruffato, 'o livro, diferente das notícias que lemos, é otimista, à medida que apresenta uma saída, uma crítica à mimese, que só reproduz, sem nada propor. A literatura cria um mundo com a pretensão de mudá-lo, como no meu caso...'. ("Móbiles urbanos," 139)

EEMC's defiance of conventional realist aesthetics estranges the experience of reading. Mirroring the inapprehensible nature of the megacity it evokes, Ruffato's stylistically varied and structurally fragmented text resists rapid critical synthesis. Carolina Lima Barbosa e Santos agrees, arguing that the novel's embrace of informal language, grammar, and style comprises a "proposta de desautomatizar o olhar de seus leitores diante das questões de ordem social abordadas é arquitetada, sobretudo, no plano estético da obra" (152). This implicit challenge to, "recuperar . . . resíduos utópicos" is no easy task given the thoroughly alienated, brutally exploitative São Paulo of *EEMC* (R. Gomes, "Móbiles urbanos," 139). Still, Ruffato effectively evokes the heterogeneity and dynamism capable of inspiring hopefulness and imagination in São Paulo despite the city's deep social divisions.

Raging against Modernization in *Babel Babilônia* (2007)

Like *EEMC*, Nelson de Oliveira's *Babel babilônia: novela* (2007) employs a fragmented aesthetic to formulate a critique of São Paulo.[176] Unlike the previous texts analyzed in this chapter, however, *Babel* does not take place in the megalopolis but rather in an unnamed, small city near the state border with Minas Gerais. Still, São Paulo is present in the characters' memories and imaginations as a symbol of the town's impending modernization. Though the setting has largely remained isolated from the pursuit of progress associated with the megacity, the construction of a twelve-story residential tower portends metaphorical integration into the rapaciously capitalist state capital. *Babel*'s twenty-two interrelated short narratives comprise an indirect yet damning portrait of the consequences of this impending transformation.

Though most fragments initially appear to share little more than their common location, the final chapter unites most of the characters when a "terrorist" destroys the newly inaugurated tower. This cathartic act of violence triggers the novel's fantastical denouement as Beatriz, a recurring character sensitive to the wordless speech of plant life, channels the spirit of Mother Earth. This hybrid being repeats the warning against unfettered progress that opens the novel and demands the annihilation of the town's residents still committed to modernization. This conclusion takes dystopian thinking to its extreme. While the totalizing violence inherent to the

[176] Nelson de Oliveira (1966-) was born in Guaíra, SP and spent his childhood and adolescence in northern São Paulo state. He began his career as an author after moving to the state capital, publishing short stories and novels since the late 1990s. Additionally, Oliveira organized the anthologies *Geração 90: manuscritos de computador* (2001) and *Geração 90: os transgressors* (2003), which remain points of reference for studies of late-twentieth-century Brazilian literature. Though he previously used a pseudonym exclusively for his children's literature, Oliveira adopted the *nome de plume* Luiz Brás for all of his fictional output in 2012. In the years since he has focused on science fictional literature including the fantastical dystopian novel *Sozinho no deserto extremo* (2012), in which nearly all of São Paulo's population mysteriously disappears ("Nelson de Oliveira").

novella's metaphorical São Paulo necessitates a forceful response, Beatriz's proposed solution likewise ends in brutality. Having blurred the border between revolution and genocide, Oliveira presents a radically utopian alternative that raises questions rather than providing firm answers. Is a harmonious coexistence with nature in a never-ending present the only possible resistance to São Paulo's viral spread? Can such a state of equilibrium be forged through mass murder? What other alternatives might be possible?

The radical proposal of *Babel*'s conclusion comes as a shock, yet the novella's title immediately foreshadows the importance of dystopian thinking. This immediate allusion to the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel conjures images of endless ambition and social fragmentation. As R. Gomes details, this structure remains a powerful symbol in contemporary urban literature due to the continual de- and re-construction of cities like São Paulo:

> Sendo, ao mesmo tempo, imagem da construção interminável, do desejo eterno, e da ruína e da devastação nelas já inscritas, a Torre passa a ser um dos emblemas da megalópole: a cidade babélica. Não há triunfo humanístico para compensar a destruição. É possível identificar aí o progresso inexorável, a renovação e a reforma, com a perpétua mudança do mundo moderno. E ainda mais: pode-se marcá-la com o símbolo da intensidade vertical da cidade como celebração da tecnologia. (*Todas* 88)

In Oliveira's novella, most characters view the tower with trepidation. The local elite, on the other hand, proclaim excitement about this marker of progress. During an inauguration ceremony, the speaker of the São Paulo House of Representatives cites Caesar, declaring, "Senhoras e senhores, alea jacta est" (140-141). While conjuring images of imperialism and war, this phrase also suggests the irreversibility of the municipality's newfound modernity. Further, the text's disconnected subsections mirror the culture of alienation that R. Gomes associates with

Babylon, "a megalópole do caos e da incomunicabilidade, da fragmentação em átomos isolados" (*Todas* 151). Seen through this lens, *Babel*'s *leitmotifs* of anonymity, broken social ties, and memory lapses reflect the influence of integration into the megacity even before the tower's inauguration.

In the novella's first section, Oliveira identifies São Paulo as an agent of impending and permanent change. "Olho mágico: cidade dos sonhos" explicitly and extensively outlines the critique of São Paulo's cultural ethos prioritizing modernity, wealth, and progress. Though he remains anonymous until the concluding sentences of the chapter, the prophet-cum-local-florist Artur serves as intradiegetic narrator. Descriptions of setting flow into sections of extended monologue as the prophet outlines the supposedly inevitable horrors naturalized by São Paulo's hegemonic ideology:

> ...a metrópole vem aí, não adianta querer preservar o presente pra sempre, a avalanche é inevitável. Falo de São Paulo, paraíso e pesadelo. Falo dos bairros sujos de São Paulo, duas ruas violentas de São Paulo, do céu enfumaçado de São Paulo. Pra ele e pra ela [Artur's audience] é como se falasse da cidade futura, da invasão do lixo e da miséria, de viadutos rachados e vagabundos de outro planeta tentando contato via rádio de pilha – estática, grupo de pagode, as putas da General Osório sintonizadas na alta do dólar. (12)

Initially, the narrator's predictions seem outlandish. However, the short narratives that follow reveal the truth behind his exaggeratedly negative view of São Paulo. The logic of the megalopolis becomes increasingly entrenched as the tower grows, bringing social alienation, ecological degradation, and capitalist exploitation to the previously secluded city.

Although few of these subsections initially appear to intersect with the opening narrative, the central themes of "Olho mágico" resonate throughout the novella. For José Leonardo Tonus,

Babel exemplifies the parabolic structure typical of fables or Medieval *exempla* wherein the novella's middle chapters (grouped in the table of contents under the label "Inferno") play out consequences warned against by earlier narratives (labelled "Anunciação"), and the final section ("Redenção") puts the original lessons into practice (83). Within this fabular structure, Tonus identifies consonance between the novella's "constante subversão das estruturas semio-narrativas próprias ao conto," and the author's desire to critique the social effects of the "empresa orgulhosa e tirânica do capitalismo globalizado" (85). For the critic, *Babel* denounces the unnecessarily accelerated rhythms of contemporary life through its exaggerated artificiality (Tonus 85). By consistently defying generic convention and creating narrative divisions that parallel the chaotic effects of the Biblical Tower of Babel, Oliveira employs a performative aesthetic in the novel's realistic and fantastical sections alike.[177] Still, the novella's cyclical structure synthesizes its diverse fragments into an overarching critique of unrestricted progress driven by greed.

Among the critiques included in "Olho mágico," Artur's predictions of environmental decay and impending amnesia prove especially relevant to the novel's conclusion. For the prophet, these interrelated phenomena are inevitable consequences of the megalopolis's unending pursuit of profit and modernity. Employing a powerful mixture of dystopian imagery, Artur presents São Paulo as an all-devouring force:

> A invasão é inevitável, eu digo a todos. E repito, inevitável, enfiem os olhos na fogueira e vejam por si sós, amanhã a esta hora São Paulo terá encampado a cidadezinha onde vocês

[177] Examples include the purely dialogical "Reavaliação," the parodical recap of Darwinian evolutionary theory that comprises "Evolução," the extremely short "Manada" and "Caça e pesca," and the comparatively long and intentionally repetitive "Zen e a arte de bem ocupar espaços vazios" and "Sabor artificial."

> nasceram, terá destruído as plantações e os pastos, terá recoberto cada centímetro quadrado de suas vidas com a película do progresso, com as cinzas e o sangue da explosão urbana. Porque São Paulo não para, é apenas boca, estômago e cu, come e caga o dia todo. (14)

This vision of totalizing devastation foreshadows the equally violent counteraction proposed by Mother Nature in the concluding section. The megacity's unceasing hunger gives no quarter to incremental solutions. The surrounding *flora* will be destroyed as a new, modern layer solidifies in the urban palimpsest. No points of *rugosidade* will remain, with the town's residents disconnected from their history and fully absorbed into the logic of the megacity.

Artur further evokes the amnesic culture produced by an unceasing focus on impending progress in "Olho mágico." Near the end of the chapter, Artur describes his own future: "Meus antigos amigos, as pessoas com quem estive ao redor da fogueira, não me reconhecem mais, deixaram metade da memória nas dependências do Memorial da América Latina, a outra metade perderam por aí" (16). This memory loss, which ironically occurs in a rare space reserved for historical reflection in São Paulo, further underlines the uncompromising ubiquity of oblivion in the novella's metaphorical megalopolis. In fact, Artur forgets his own identity until the fragment's final lines. This widespread forgetting poses a challenge to critique, yet Oliveira's characters do not embrace disciplined post-utopianism to learn from the present and past. Instead, the novella concludes with call to disregard the future entirely and co-exist in with nature in an eternal present.

This fantastical, inter-species response to the unyielding nature of the megalopolis only appears in the novella's final narrative, but earlier fragments provide glimpses into the logic of the biosphere. Wordless communication between *flora* and humanity first appears in "Por que o

mundo não se esforça pra me fazer feliz?" when Beatriz perceives the language of the plants around her (48). This recurring character, it seems, is especially sensitive to the forest due to her long contemplation of the wooded area where her father disappears in the third chapter, "Beatriz." Still, this ability to perceive natural intelligence spreads as the tower nears completion. In "Pra onde vai a luz quando o medo acende o escuro?," descriptions of five characters' daily lives conclude with the same passage: "o clarão verde e rugoso da mata absoluta e do rio áspero cegou a todos, revelando-lhes a verdade vegetal, mineral, subterrânea, a verdade da supremacia orgânica, a verdade da fotossíntese e do vento líquido" (132-137). The first such subsection focuses on an unnamed professor whose frustration with modernization triggers a conscious turn to anti-utopianism in line with Almino's *instantaneísmo*: "De agora em diante vou dar minha aula, entrar neste ônibus e esquecer que o mundo existe" (131). Though the forest's intentions initially remain mysterious (if they exist at all), Oliveira suggests that they are either triggered by this disillusionment or counteract this sense of resignation.

Another symbol of the uneasy coexistence between nature and modernity are the illustrations interspersed throughout *Babel*, including immediately following "Pra onde vai a luz." As explained in the front-matter, these images are digitally altered versions of photographs by Tereza Yamashita that highlight "locais em que a natureza e as ruínas da civilização estão em luta silenciosa." For Tonus, "tais objetos sugerem um retorno a um estado amorfo do universo caótico onde se conjugam o inacabado e o decomposto, o fim e o início dos tempos" (82). In some images, Yamashita uses grey to denote a delicate equilibrium between the rigidity of manmade structures (including fences, grates, and bricks) and the sinuous curves of tree trunks, branches, and roots. Others use high-contrast black and white to illustrate imbalance between these two worlds. This second category increasingly resonates with the text as it becomes

undeniable that the forest's communications with humanity is a reaction to town's turn towards the voracious logic of São Paulo.

With no resolution possible between the biosphere and Babylon, the *flora* at last assumes a human voice to propose the destruction of those inculcated into the pursuit of unending progress. This mystical union between Beatriz and Mother Earth occurs in the novel's final chapter, "Babel Babilônia." This synthesis with the natural world exemplifies P. Vieira's concept of "zoophytographia," or interspecies writing, wherein writers "imagin[e] a utopia of *living with* and *learning from* plant and animal modes of being" (70). The lessons derived from the spirit of nature in "Babel Babilônia" point towards a radically utopian future. This revolution, however, can only be achieved through a violent purge of the town's residents unable or unwilling to heed this call. The section begins with the tower's destruction. Beatriz's young daughter is among the dead. The mother instinctively rushes to the woods for a burial, where she observes her child's corpse rapidly subsumed into the biosphere through roots (154). A narrator assumed to be Artur describes this magical process as healing, drawing a stark contrast to the description of São Paulo in subsequent pages: "Você não estava lá, estava? Quando a dor dos pés-de-galinha e das ervas-de-andorinha aliviou a menina morta do peso do edifício? É, do peso das paredes, das vigas e dos vergalhões que continuavam caindo em pensamento, dentro do crânio da coitada" (155). This sensation of peacefulness is striking yet ephemeral as Beatriz fuses with the surrounding trees and repeats much of the initial denunciation of São Paulo and its *doxa* from "Olho mágico" (157-160).[178]

Beatriz calls on the twenty assembled onlookers to light a fire and join her in the blaze. Inside, they receive a vision of a dystopian future after being swallowed by the megalopolis

[178] Gendered adjectives reveal Beatriz's voice in the denouncement.

(161). As the group steps out from the fire, the prophetess of the forest demands the death of the city dwellers: "Todos mortos. / Esse era o desejo da mãe das árvores. Da mãe das aves. Da mãe das águas. / *Todos?!* / *Esse é o único jeito.* / *De quê?* / *De preservar o presente pra sempre*" (161-162). São Paulo is all-consuming, making its complete eradication the only possibility for other social forms to persevere: "*Matem todos. Esqueçam o que aconteceu aqui. Enterrem os mortos. . . . E tentem viver em paz.* / Helicóptero. Rifle AR-15. / Limusine. / Lança-chamas. / Adeus" (162-163). Life in the eternal present of the biosphere is a violent rejection of unyielding futurity and rapacious greed of São Paulo and its ethos of capitalist modernization. Still, the forest spirit's genocidal demands underscore the high cost of such aspiration and the permeable border between prescriptive "blueprint utopia" and totalitarian violence identified by Jacoby.

Any imagined response devoid of radical vision is unlikely to halt the inexorable march of the novella's metaphorical São Paulo. However, the utopian potential of this final chapter remains open to debate. Mother Earth's command to her followers to forget the violence they are set to perpetrate represents desire for a social and historical tabula rasa. As exemplified by Brasília's history, such an objective is not easily enacted. In theory, mankind could subsequently manifest original, peaceful modes of existence in harmony with the rhythms of the natural world. At the same time, though, the spirit's call for intentional oblivion will preclude future dystopian thinking and post-utopian thought. Without this knowledge, there is no guarantee that humans will not re-create Babylon. Oliveira offers no further resolution, leaving the reader to ponder the potential effects of this revolutionary proposal.

Chapter Three Conclusion

São Paulo's dynamism and heterogeneity allow for considerable thematic and geographical diversity even among texts united by their critical interest in issues of identity, mythology, and ideology. The included authors share an underlying desire to reimagine the megacity's liberal, capitalist ethos yet depict varying levels of optimism that such change is possible. The existing political and economic system often appears so deeply ingrained in the megacity that envisioning alternative social orders borders on impossible. The close association between wealth and morality that binds many poor *paulistanos* to the pursuit of profit is similarly intractable. Despite this common pessimism, however, the selected texts foreground dystopian imagery and ideological critique to suggest the need to rethink capitalism in the megacity.

The combined effect of these techniques is a consensus that small-scale reforms of the city's (neo)liberal logic are likely insufficient to avoid continued alienation or ecological collapse. Ferréz and Ruffato each introduce marginalized characters who commit to striving within the status quo to survive. Still, both authors also include direct ideological critiques that highlight the fallacy of such post-utopian aspiration unaccompanied by major reform. Tiburi's protagonist redoubles her existing criticism of capitalism in the city by distancing herself from Antonio, who remains unable to perceive the systematic roots of his exploitation. Brandão and Oliveira suggest more radical responses to the unyielding churn of resources fueling modernization. *Não verás* illustrates a degraded megacity that corresponds with Artur and Mother Earth's most pessimistic predictions in *Babel*. While both works' respective revolutions remain inchoate, there is little doubt that extreme social and economic realignment is necessary.

Impacts of São Paulo's capitalist identity and ideology that resonate throughout the selected works include socioeconomic inequality, a cultural fixation on the future that obscures

memory, and environmental decay. The selected narratives offer little hope that the city's class divide can be bridged, instead highlighting the segregation, abusive labor dynamics, and state-sanctioned violence that maintain the status quo. The only mentions of concrete aspirations seeking to upend these dynamics come through Ferréz's autobiographical references to his own activism. Though *Ninguém* includes plenty of narratives revealing dubiousness about the future of the periphery, the author maintains his conviction that peripherical communities can educate their members about the *doxa* naturalizing their exploitation. Brandão and Oliveira each hint at revolutionary overthrow of capitalism yet fail to illustrate its arrival. Ruffato and Tiburi, respectively, vaguely hope for the megalopolis's future, yet their respective dystopian visions remain disconnected from concrete initiatives seeking to ameliorate inequality.

The ideology naturalizing socioeconomic division in the megacity similarly encourages cultural amnesia by prioritizing progress over preservation. Most explicitly detailed by Artur in *Babel*, this unending pursuit of wealth and modernity catalyzes environmental degradation while undermining critical assessment of the present and past. The rapidly compounding *técnicas* of the megacity constantly resurface the urban palimpsest. Deprived of sites of memory, characters like Lúcia in *Sob os pés* and Souza in *Não verás* struggle mightily to re-engage critically with their memories and use this analysis in post-utopian aspiration. Ferréz alludes to his own post-utopianism grounded in critique of the city's myths and ideology, yet *Ninguém* likewise contains several narratives where post-utopian aspiration comes to naught. Mother Earth's promise of a historical tabula rasa in *Babel* implies that the only antidote to São Paulo's amnesia is the total eradication of the capitalist system and its ethos of progress. Even in this case, however, humanity would have no memories to warn them against potential inclinations to return to this forgotten system.

The selected authors also critique São Paulo through images of the megacity's degraded environment. The exaggerated pollution of the periphery appears at the margins of *EEMC* and *Ninguém* to further amplify the dystopian aesthetic harnessed by each work. Tiburi's environmental decay is similarly peripherical to Lúcia's narrative arc. Still, her description of interminable drought, poisoned water, and air thick with pollution draws attention to the naturalization of environmental and human rights abuses alike. *Não verás*'s Amazonian desert and scorching, reeking São Paulo comprise a classic environmental dystopia, creating obvious links between this exaggerated, defamiliarized future and the policies of the military dictatorship. A much delayed, cleansing rain represents the hopefulness implicit in critical dystopia as Souza commits to collective action to free his fellow prisoners at the *Marquises Extensas*. While *Não verás* and *Sob os pés* both employ impending showers as signifiers of renewed hope, Oliveira's vision of ecological renewal is uniquely extreme. As Mother Earth assumes agency to halt the spread of modernity, she incites widespread killings to guarantee nature's permanence. The novella's radical reframing of mankind's relationship with *flora* sparks consideration about the difference between revolution and genocide given the threat of environmental collapse. Though fantastical, such questions may well become progressively actual as a climate crisis in line with that seen in *Não verás* or *Sob os pés* appears increasingly possible.

CHAPTER FOUR

Kaleidoscopic Hope in Cinematic São Paulo

Cinema in São Paulo: A Brief Overview

Alongside Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo has remained a central locus of national film production since the medium's arrival in Brazil. São Paulo's filmmakers negotiated multiple cycles of boom and bust over the last century, yet few years have passed without the release of films produced in the city. Popular and auteurist cinema have long coexisted in the megalopolis as generations of artists and producers sought balance between profit, self-expression, and social critique. Although a detailed summary of film in São Paulo exceeds the bounds of this dissertation, a brief historical survey will productively contextualize the works selected for analysis in this chapter. Within this overview, this section will emphasize films and artists who have proven especially influential on the filmmakers included in this study and highlight the way that certain movements and historical moments embrace or reject utopian thinking.

São Paulo developed rapidly into a center of cinematic exhibition and production during the first three decades of the twentieth century. As Maria Rita Eliezer Galvão details in her history of early cinema in São Paulo, projections of moving images began in the final years of the nineteenth century and the city's first permanent cinema opened in 1907 (*Crônica* 19-21). The expanding local proletariat spearheaded early filmmaking as immigrants in neighborhoods like Brás, Bexiga, and Barra Funda gave shape to a uniquely *paulista* variant of silent cinema whose primary themes included changes precipitated by the pursuit of progress:

> …o cinema mudo paulista . . . [é] tão vinculada à própria cidade e às suas características específicas que é paulista justamente porque, em boa parte, é feito por estrangeiros; tão marcado no tempo e no espaço que, não apenas reflete a vida da cidade – documentando comícios e carnavais, a expansão imobiliária e as fazendas de café, as fábricas e as revoluções, os tipos humanos e o mundo físico – como, sobretudo, é ele próprio um reflexo da vida paulista, no seu progresso e na sua mediocridade, na sua vitalidade e no seu provincianismo. (Galvão, *Crônica* 18)

The immigrant entrepreneur Gilberto Rossi was particularly impactful during this time. As Carlos Roberto de Souza details, Rossi arrived in São Paulo from Italy 1911 and began directing commissioned documentaries, portraits of daily life, and political propaganda grouped under the title *cinema de cavação* (69-70). In the following decades, Rossi collaborated with community-based collectives like the Escola de Artes Cinematográficas Azzuri and founded a production company, Rossi Film, where he oversaw fictional works including the critical and commercial successes José Medina's "Exemplo Regenerador" (1919) and "Fragmentos da vida" (1929) (Galvão, *Crônica* 40-41).

An especially influential film from this period is *São Paulo: sinfonia da metrópole* (1929), directed by the Hungarian immigrants Adalberto Kemeny and Rudolf Rex Lustig. This experimental documentary embodies the early hopes for modern cinema in the city described by Galvão: "O mito do *progresso paulista* atingia o cinema. Esperava-se que de São Paulo surgisse a *indústria* do filme. Afinal, era esta a terra da indústria, do espírito arrojado, dos capitalistas…" (*Crônica* 47). *São Paulo, sinfonia da metrópole* incorporates the aesthetics of the city-symphony films popular in Europe at the time while highlighting the Brazilian metropolis's growing industrial prowess and newfound modernity. The film effectively communicates the excitement

of a period when the visible impact of economic growth and material progress appeared to promise a utopian future for São Paulo. The stock market collapse of the same year, however, reminded even the most optimistic *paulistas* of the impossibility of unbroken development and unending profit.

The year 1929 also saw the release of Luiz de Barros's *caipira* comedy *Acabaram-se os otários*, the first Brazilian film with synchronous sound.[179] For Afrânio Mendes Catani and José Inácio de Melo Souza, the film's Movietone technology, "além de colocar em farrapos as apostas estéticas do cinema que se fazia até então, destruiu em poucos anos o grande centro produtor de filmes de ficção daqueles tempos que era São Paulo" (25). The subsequent decade saw the city's production decline precipitously as international (primarily American) films featuring synchronous sound dominated the national box office.[180] Rio de Janeiro continued to produce *chanchada* musical comedies, but São Paulo experienced "um longo período de estagnação. Anos inteiros por vezes se passam sem que um único filme seja produzido" (Galvão, *Burguesia* 9).[181] Still, the brief and disastrous existence of the Empresa Sul Americana de Filmes (founded in 1939) reveals continued desire to make the growing city a hub of industrialized cinema (Catani and Souza 26).

[179] *Caipira* refers to a resident of rural São Paulo state. The term also carries a connotation of backwardness, making the *caipira* a prime subject for comedies of manners.

[180] From 1935-1949 only twelve feature films were produced in São Paulo (Galvão, *Burguesia* 10).

[181] During this period, the newly created Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda of Getúlio Vargas's Estado Novo forced the closure of São Paulo's Cinema Club on accusations of hosting subversive activity (Catani and Souza 35).

This aspiration briefly came to fruition after Francisco Matarazzo Sobrinho founded the Companhia Cinematográfica Vera Cruz in 1949.[182] Part of a wider moment of cultural effervescence that included the foundation of the Museu de Arte de São Paulo and the Teatro Brasileiro de Comédia, this studio backed by members of the city's industrial bourgeoisie revealed ambitions of cosmopolitanism among the local elite (Galvão, *Burguesia*, 11). Vera Cruz, modeled on Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, constructed an expansive complex in São Bernardo do Campo and released eighteen, generically diverse feature films over the next four years (Johnson and Stam 29). The studio's greatest success was Lima Barreto's western-influenced *O cangaceiro* (1953), which won a prize for adventure films at Cannes.[183] Still, the "elitist class values" typical of Vera Cruz's films disconnected its films from Brazilian reality and curtailed any possibility of meaningful social or ideological critique (Johnson and Stam 29). The studio rapidly descended into bankruptcy due to factors including high maintenance costs, the lack of distribution and exhibition infrastructure, and the absence of governmental support (C. Souza 115).[184]

After the dissolution of Vera Cruz in 1953, other industrial studios persisted while small-budget, so-called independent cinema began to emerge in the city. As Catani details, the Companhia Cinematográfica Maristela produced roughly twenty features from 1950-1958 before

[182] The participation of Kemeny, Lustig and associates from their production company Rex Film in Vera Cruz's foundation provides the only link between the studio and São Paulo's silent film era (Galvão, *Burguesia*, 86).

[183] Vera Cruz likewise served as a proving ground the comedic actor Amáncio Mazzaropi, whose *caipira* characters remained popular at the box office for the next three decades (C. Souza 115-116).

[184] Vera Cruz notoriously entrusted distribution of *O Cangaceiro* to Columbia Pictures, a company with little incentive to prioritize the Brazilian studio's films (Johnson and Stam 28).

closing due to compounding financial losses and an unfriendly political landscape (442-444).[185] Catani notes the symbolism of Maristela's demise occurring in the same year that Roberto Santos released *O grande momento* (1958). This film, produced by Cinema Novo pioneer Nelson Pereira dos Santos, cut costs by renting studio space and including a percentage of potential box-office returns as part of the actors' pay (Catani 444). *O grande momento*, which centers on the daily life of São Paulo's urban working class, exemplifies a growing preference for small-scale productions in the city.[186] Though such films are not necessarily fueled by ideological opposition to the studio system, they do allow a level of social critique generally absent from the city's industrial production.

Production independent of large studios continued apace in the 1960s. Important works from the period include Walter Hugo Khouri's[187] existentialist drama *Noite vazia* (1964) and Luiz Sérgio Person's influential *São Paulo, sociedade anônima* (1965).[188] Person's film remains a touchstone for the city's filmmakers due in large part to its stark critique of the social and psychological side effects of São Paulo's drive for unending modernization. As Jean-Claude

[185] Multifilmes, a similar studio, lasted only two years (1952-1954) but released Brazil's first film shot in color: Ernesto Remani's *Destino em apuros* (1953) (C. Souza 118).

[186] C. Souza groups *O grande momento* with works like Rodolfo Nanni's *O saci* (1953), Osvaldo Sampaio's *A estrada* (1957), Anselmo Duarte's *Absolutamente certo* (1957), and Galileu Garcia's *Cara de fogo* (1958) (118).

[187] Khouri's career as a director stretches nearly five decades. After directing his first film while a student at USP, Khouri worked as a crew member on *O cangaceiro* (Costa and Cánepa 466). He then worked with several producers over the next decade before he and his brother acquired the Vera Cruz trademark and co-produced several films from 1970-1971 including Khouri's *O palácio dos anjos* (1970) and Arnaldo Jabor's *Pindorama* (1970) (Costa and Cánepa 467).

[188] As Flávia Cesarino Costa and Laura Loguercio Cánepa note, Person first worked as an assistant director for Maristela and spent two years studying at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia in Rome before returning to São Paulo and directing his first feature (464).

Bernardet describes, the film neatly embodies the vanguard of ideological self-critique among select middle-class artists during this period (*Brasil* 28-29). The portrait of class, alienation, and the search for profit in *São Paulo, sociedade anônima* exemplifies a dystopian vision of modernization, while the protagonist's unwitting return to the megacity in the final sequence suggests the absence of a utopian horizon. Person's work also testifies to the occasional identification between certain São Paulo-based filmmakers and the primarily *carioca* Cinema Novo. Johnson and Stam note how the work's urban social critique and anti-illusionistic filmmaking exemplify the prevailing thematic and aesthetic concerns of Cinema Novo's second phase (36).[189]

The megacity remains more closely associated with the Cinema Marginal movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Fernão Pessoa Ramos credits São Paulo-based Rogério Sganzerla and his aesthetically and thematically provocative *O bandido da luz vermelha* (1968) with spearheading this "anti-vanguarda" group alongside the early films of *carioca* Júlio Bressane (179).[190] Disinterested in explicit political engagement, São Paulo-based Cinema Marginal filmmakers like Sganzerla, Carlos Reichenbach, and Andreia Tonacci embraced "garbage esthetics" to discomfit the typically middle class Brazilian filmgoing public (Johnson and Stam 39).[191] Though these directors would later move on to other styles of cinema, Cinema Marginal exemplifies a turn towards iconoclastic, auteurist production as Brazil entered into the most

[189] Geraldo Sarno's documentary "Viramundo" (1965) is similarly critical. This portrait of the struggles of Northeastern labor migrants in the rapidly growing city illustrates the uneven distribution of modernity in São Paulo.

[190] Sganzerla subsequently moved to Rio de Janeiro to work with fellow Cinema Marginal filmmaker Júlio Bressane at his production company, Bel-Air Filmes.

[191] Tonacci's only feature from this period, *Bang Bang* (1971), was financed by the Secretaria de Cultura do Estado de São Paulo but shot in Minas Gerais (Ramos 189).

repressive period of the military dictatorship. This group's use of producers in the so-called Boca do Lixo for financing also prefigures the area's relevance during the next decades of *paulistano* cinema.

The Boca do Lixo, located along the Rua do Triunfo in central São Paulo, had a long history as a site of cinematic distribution by the era of Cinema Marginal. As Alessandro Gamo and Luís Alberto Rocha Melo detail, the area was first known as the Boca do Lixo de Cinema due to the presence of foreign film distributors like Fox, Paramount, and RKO during the early twentieth century (323). While long associated with prostitution and crime, the 1966 quota for exhibition of Brazilian films in theaters presented a new opportunity for profit. In the following year, local producers and distributors quickly concentrated along the Rua do Triunfo and began to finance features (Gamo and Melo 323-324).[192] Before long, the area was a hotbed of cinematic production with Cinema Marginal directors coexisting with already-established figures like Khouri and Person and other iconoclasts like the horror innovator José Mojica Marins[193] and the more lyrical Ozualdo Candeias.[194] In time, however, the area's entrepreneurs increasingly prioritized the low-budget, erotic comedies known as *pornochanchadas*.

[192] There is some dispute as to which work was first financed in this way. Candeias argues that his film *A margem* (1967) was first, while Reichenbach proposes that the first was *As libertinas* (1968), an erotic, episodical work he co-directed with Antônio Lima and João Callegaro (Gamo and Melo 325; Ramos 182).

[193] The working-class Marins began directing films in the 1950s before overseeing landmark horror films featuring his iconic character Zé do Caixão in the 1960s. By the early 1970s, he was a fixture in the Boca do Lixo, where he produced a series of films featuring explicit sex (Ramos 194-195). After becoming a cult figure abroad after to his films' release on video, Marins returned to the character of Zé do Caixão in 2008's *Encarnação do demônio*.

[194] Candeias's working-class background is reflected in *A margem* (1967), a successful film that foreshadows the interest in affect and morality of his subsequent production (Ramos 196-198).

In his history of the Boca do Lixo, Nuno Cesar Abreu highlights two historical moments that comprise the area's apex. The first period extends until 1975 as the Boca do Lixo "atrai pessoas que querem 'fazer cinema,' aventura artística, produção sustentada por economia de capital 'selvagem' e relações de trabalho solidárias e primitivas" (41). In the subsequent seven years, the area produced higher-quality films, losing its rugged individualism as hierarchization took hold (42). The mission of forging "um *cinema popular brasileiro* plantado no erótico" became increasingly pronounced as producers prioritized the profitable formula "produção de baixo custo + erotismo + título apelativo" (Abreu 38). Many of the area's businesses remained active throughout the 1980s, but the arrival of American pornography on home video led most producers to close by the decade's end (Gamo and Melo 352).[195]

Several other films and filmmakers from the late 1970s and early 1980s merit mention. Inspired by the massive strikes in the *ABC paulista* from 1978 to 1980, multiple directors made labor central to their production. Non-fictional accounts of these work stoppages were especially prominent, while two Cinema Novo-associated artists made impactful fictional works about labor in the megacity.[196] João Batista de Andrade's narrative film *O homem que virou suco* (1980) centers on the suffering of Northeastern laborers in the megalopolis, juxtaposing poetry with the alienation, violence, and poverty that make life difficult for working-class migrants. Leon Hirszman's *Eles não usam black-tie* (1981) adapts Gianfrancesco Guarnieri's play about

[195] Gamo and Melo note that twenty-first century documentarians have heralded a re-appreciation of this previously derided period (Gamo and Melo 352-353).

[196] 1979 saw the release of the feature-length documentary *Braços cruzados, máquinas paradas* (Roberto Gervitz and Sérgio Toledo) and two documentary shorts from João Batista de Andrade: "Greve!" and "Trabalhadores: presente!". Renato Tapajós directed the non-fiction feature *Linha de montagem* three years later.

organized labor, highlighting the importance of solidarity to counteract exploitation.[197] The demystification of work and modernity that connects these works signifies the possibility of politically and critically engaged cinema centered on labor.

Other influential works from the same period defy categorization. Suzana Amaral's *A hora da estrela* (1985) adapts Clarice Lispector's Rio de Janeiro-set novel to working-class São Paulo. The film balances social realism with existentialism as the protagonist negotiates a tenuous romance with a metalworker and fellow Northeastern migrant in the grim megacity. Stam et al. also note a tendency towards meta-cinema in films like Walter Rogério's "A voz do Brasil" (1981), Ícaro Martins and José Antônio Garcia's *Estrela Nua* (1985), and Reichenbach's *O império do desejo* (1980) (401-402). Over a decade removed from the height of Cinema Marginal, the prolific Reichenbach bounced between genres and styles while remaining consistently critical. His production during the 1980s alone includes a meta-cinematic *pornochanchada* (the aforementioned *O império*), a loose adaptation of *Faust* (*Filme demência*, 1985), and a social realist drama set in the megacity's periphery (*Anjos do Arrabalde*, 1987).

The Vila Madalena group that rose to prominence during the early 1980s generally eschewed social or political critique. Trained at USP's Escola de Comunicação e Artes (ECA/USP), these filmmakers often found financing in the Boca do Lixo yet resisted the aesthetic conventions typical of the area's production.[198] As Bernardet describes in his incisive analysis of this generation's early films, stylistic and ideological concerns connect the Vila Madalena generation despite the thematic diversity of their work. In the group's shorts and

[197] Hirszman also planned a documentary about the large-scale protests of 1979, though his *ABC da greve* was finished and released posthumously in 1990.

[198] This division of USP was founded in 1966 and remains an important training ground for many of São Paulo's young filmmakers.

feature films including *Asa branca, um sonho brasileiro* (Djalma Batista Limongi, 1980), *Noites paraguaias* (Aloysio Raulino, 1982), and *A marvada carne* (André Klotzel, 1985), the critic notes defining characteristics including the coexistence of linear and fractured narrative elements, appreciation for São Paulo, an interest in popular appeal, and an aversion to dogmatism ("Os jovens" 66-76, 82-84). Stam et al. echo this conclusion in their analysis published after the release of subsequent, influential films like Chico Botelho's *Cidade oculta* (1986), Wilson Barros's *Anjos da noite* (1987), and Guilherme de Almeida Prado's *A dama do cine Shanghai* (1987): "In this post-modernist cinema, the filmmaker eschews grand ambitions in order to avoid grand disappointments and aims instead for a cinema that is at once more modest, more open, and more solicitous of the audience's affection" (435). This stylish yet politically restrained cinema avoids the radical aesthetics and biting ideological and social critique typical of many Brazilian *auteurs*.

While Reichenbach is among the few directors nationwide to produce and release films directly following the dissolution of Embrafilme, the sudden, temporary end of public financing otherwise brought the city's cinematic output to a halt. Despite the return to cautious utopianism identified by Nagib in many films of the *retomada*, São Paulo-based filmmakers generally adopt a pessimistic view of the future during this time. For the critic, the megacity is an ideal location to explore the dystopian social fractures worsened by the military period and the turn towards neoliberalism. Noting the influence of critical filmakers including Sganzerla, Reichenbach, Candeias, and Marins on Beto Brant's *O invasor* (2001), Nagib concludes that the film's "São Paulo, enquanto metrópole periférica caótica, típica do capitalismo tardio, constitui terreno propício para a atualização do *thriller* policial e seus enredos recheados de chantagem, conspiração, ganância, assassinatos e um pessimismo generalizado" (164, 166). *O invasor* is

particularly emblematic of the cynicism also visible in *paulistano* films of the *retomada* like Brant's prior film *Ação entre amigos* (1998),[199] Ugo Giorgetti's *Sábado* (1995), and Tata Amaral's *Um céu de estrelas* (1996).[200]

The years since the *retomada* are notable for their heterogeneity. Filmmakers based in the megacity propose divergent responses to ongoing issues including alienation, amnesia, and urban violence. For Eduardo, the city's twenty-first-century filmmakers generally view the city as dystopian. Still, the aesthetics preferred while negotiating this "mundo embrutecido e embrutecedor" vary over time (588). The critic notes the importance of family and affective ties after the turn of the century by directors including Laís Bodanzky (*Bicho de 7 cabeças*, 2000), Lina Chamie (*Tônica dominante*, 2000), Roberto Moreira *(Contra todos*, 2004), and Anna Muylaert (*Durval discos*, 2002) (588). In films released after 2005, Eduardo describes how filmmakers pessimistic about the city including Marco Dutra and Juliana Rojas (*Trabalhar cansa*, 2011), Rubens Rewald and Rossana Foglia (*Super nada*, 2012), and Gregorio Graziosi (*Obra*, 2014) often prioritize interior spaces and anti-illusionistic representation (588). Though not mentioned by the critic, films included in this chapter like Heitor Dhalia's *O cheiro do ralo* (2007), Bianchi's *Os inquilinos* (2007), and Jeferson De's *Bróder* (2010) each negotiate these same tensions.

Despite their rarity during the *retomada*, optimistic visions of the city have since returned to the screen. These relatively hopeful films are surprisingly common when compared to the city's twenty-first century literary production. Maria Cecília Ferreira de Nichile names Carlos

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[199] *Ação entre amigos*, which follows four friends seeking revenge on the man who tortured them during the dictatorship, begins in the megacity before moving to a rural town.

[200] Similar pessimism likewise defines *Cidade de Deus* (2002), set in Rio de Janeiro but directed by the *paulistanos* Fernando Meirelles and Kátia Lund.

Alberto Riccelli's *O signo da cidade* (2007) and Chamie's *São Silvestre* (2013) as exemplary of a new wave of films that engage with utopian thought to re-imagine the megalopolis:

> …sujeitos da não aceitação, que vão contra a programação da cidade e descobrem maneiras de se opor a esses modos de vida ou mesmo de adaptá-los, podendo entrar em consonância com esse espaço. Desse modo, ao contrário daqueles indivíduos impotentes da São Paulo dos anos 60, esses protagonistas se mostram sujeitos da ação, impulsionados pelos desejos de mudanças. (61)

This commitment to social dreaming, also discernible in films like Philippe Barcinski's *Não por acaso* (2007), Viviane Ferreira's "O dia de Jerusa" (2014), Muylaert's *Que horas ela volta?* (2015), reveals belief that life in São Paulo can meaningfully improve through a post-utopian commitment to social critique and de Certeauian tactics. Eliane Caffé's hybrid film *Era o Hotel Cambridge* (2016) likewise acknowledges tenuous hope that the appropriation of urban space by marginalized citizens can foment social and political change. While a better future is never guaranteed, these films suggest that incremental change within the status quo can reshape the city for the better.

The high number of films produced in São Paulo relative to Brasília challenges effective critical synthesis of the role of utopianism in the city's recent cinema. As a panoramic vision of films released in the last forty years extends beyond the limits of this dissertation, this section analyzes a single, exemplary work from the more thoroughly researched post-modern and *retomada* periods. The rest of the included works represent the varied perspectives typical of twenty-first-century production. The first included film is Botelho's *Cidade oculta,* a prime example of the aesthetics and outlook typical of the Vila Madalena group, followed by Amaral's extremely pessimistic *Um céu de estrelas,* released during the *retomada*. The following films are

are ordered by thematic and aesthetic divergences and parallels. I begin with two films from 2007 with contrasting expectations about the possibility of social and economic disalienation: Dhalia's *O cheiro do ralo* and Barcinski's *Não por acaso*. Next, I analyze De's *Bróder*, highlighting points of connection between the film's vision of the periphery and the critiques visible in the previous works. Finally, I consider Bianchi's *Os inquilinos* and Dutras and Rojas's *Trabalhar cansa*, two highly critical visions of the city's class, racial, and geographical divides.

Chico Botelho's City at Night

The São Paulo of Chico Botelho's *Cidade oculta* (1986) is nearly exclusively nocturnal.[201] Neon lights and wet streets form the basis of a striking visual palette while punk and electronic music dominate the soundtrack. For Ramos, "*Cidade oculta* incorpora de modo paradigmático o pós-modernismo no cinema brasileiro" (382). The megacity is at once degraded and alluring, drawing comparisons with Ridley Scott's dystopian classic *Blade Runner* (1982) (Ramos 382; Stam et al. 435). Botelho balances a "pastiche plot [that] revolves around two-dimensional characters with cartoonish names" with frequent set pieces including extended dance sequences (Stam et al. 435-436). The engaging gangsters versus police framing, performances by bands, and multiple sequences highlighting the allure of lead actress Carla Camurati reveal the director's interest in popular appeal. While the real city's flaws inspire the

[201] Originally from Santos, SP, Botelho (1948-1991) studied at ECA/USP from 1969-1973 and worked as a professor of photography after graduation. Alongside co-directing several short films with Ella Dürst, Botelho worked consistently as a cinematographer for works including Roberto Santos's *As três mortes de Solano* (1976) and Nelson Pereira dos Santos's *Estrada da vida* (1980). His feature-length début as director is 1982's *Janete*, about a young prostitute in the Boca do Lixo and her travails while in prison. *Cidade oculta* is Botelho's second and final feature as director, though he continued to work as a screenwriter and photographer until his premature death ("Chico Botelho").

exaggerated archetypes of *Cidade oculta*, the film exemplifies the aversion to grand ambition typical of the Vila Madalena group by prioritizing spectacle over social, political, or ideological critique.

The motif of predestination recurs throughout the film's rote narrative, suggesting the limited impact of utopian yearning in this exciting São Paulo. After an opening shot of the Altino Arantes skyscraper at night, Botelho cuts to a brief scene where a ventriloquist and a human performer portraying his dummy introduce the film in front of a black background (0:00:30-0:01:50). At the film's conclusion, the pair return to declare the end of the narrative before the camera zooms out to reveal an audience including the crime boss Bozo (Jayme Del Cueto). The camera cuts to the skyline from the opening shot, now at dawn, before the credits roll (1:06:10-1:07:00). This framing device implies that the events depicted in *Cidade oculta* comprise a story recounted nightly by the performers. While the visual association between the spectator and the wealthy, cruel Bozo in the second scene functions as a subtle implication of the typical Brazilian filmgoer, these scenes comprise an additional layer of artifice highlighting the predetermined nature of the cinematic narrative on display and distancing *Cidade oculta* from specific social critique.

Fig. 17. Performer and mannequin introduce the film (0:00:35).

The Tarot arcade game that the *femme fatale* Shirley Sombra (Camurati) plays throughout the film further underscores the theme of immutability. In one scene, the character sees an image of the ex-con Anjo (Arrigo Barnabé), the film's protagonist, on the machine's screen.[202] The card representing the man's fate reads "O enforcado," predicting the character's impending death (0:30:15-0:30:45). Shirley plays the game once more after Anjo survives a shootout with Bozo's henchmen. A voice from within the machine repeatedly intones "perdeu" as she shoves the game in frustration (0:58:50-0:59:10). While Botelho briefly sows doubt about the protagonist's destiny when his friend and rival Japa (Celso Seiki) insists he will outrun the corrupt policeman Ratão (Cláudio Mamberti), the character in fact dies almost immediately (1:03:30-1:04:05). The

[202] Barnabé is also responsible for the film's soundtrack.

fate blatantly foreshadowed by the Tarot machine thus comes to fruition, suggesting the futility of the Anjo and Japa's respective aspirations. Although the film's conclusion provides plenty of stimulating imagery and sound, there is ultimately little place for utopianism in Botelho's nocturnal São Paulo.[203]

While *Cidade oculta* directly foretells the protagonist's fate, the characters' backstories remain unclear for much of the film. An early newscast reveals Anjo's arrest for drug trafficking by Ratão, yet the details of the incident leading to his imprisonment appear via an extended series of brief flashbacks. For Felipe Rocha:

> Trata-se de uma breve cena, dividida em diversos pedaços e espalhada ao longo do filme – por vezes teimando em aparecer em momentos onde o presente é infinitamente mais importante. Anjo se prende a essa lembrança em vez de seguir em frente e, ao mesmo tempo em que isso cause um pouco de frustração devido às quebras de tensão no filme, por outro lado faz completo sentido dentro da cabeça perturbada do personagem e dentro daquele universo. (54)

While the highly fragmented nature of this sequence might correspond with the traumatized Anjo's perspective, some of the shots in the flashback stray meaningfully from his point-of-view without adding further clarity. One sequence implies Japa's complicity with the hijacking plot, yet Ratão and his corrupt associates seem the most likely culprits.[204] A shift in focus centered on Anjo's face in the final flashback scene suggests that he faints under an overturned truck before

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[203] Especially notable are the canted frames that Stam et al. compare to Orson Welles's *Touch of Evil* (1958) and the Japanese-inspired architecture of the Liberdade neighborhood where the climactic shootout occurs (435).

[204] The truck driven by Anjo and Japa crashes when someone throws a rock from an overpass. Although this person's face is obscured, Japa appears to intentionally distract Anjo as they near the bridge by asking him for a light (0:47:30-0:48:00).

being arrested, yet the protagonist confides to Japa that he managed to hide some of the contraband (thus potentially confirming Shirley's suspicions about his reason for repeatedly dredging the Pinheiros[205] river) (1:02:00).[206] This continued lack of clarity about the narrative's inciting incident reveals the primacy of style in *Cidade oculta* while challenging interpretations of the film rooted in morality or allegory.

This disinterest in consistent allegorical representation comes as a surprise due to the presence of elements lending themselves to such a reading early in the film. Ratão first appears in a press conference posed in front of the São Paulo state flag, creating an obvious association between this corrupt and murderous character and the city's government that Botelho does not subsequently explore (0:02:45-0:03:00). Similarly, Anjo's commitment to scraping the bed of the Pinheiros suggests an interest in São Paulo's ecology and history otherwise absent from the film. In his first scene as a free man, the protagonist unearths a classical sculpture and a ring with a large, pink jewel (0:05:30-0:07:15). Although the statue never reappears, the ring changes hands between several characters. When Shirley takes the ring from Anjo, the protagonist begins a dialogue that, at first, suggests the symbolic importance of the object:

"Estava no meio da merda."

"Merda é dinheiro."

"Este anel não vale nada."

"Vai me dar sorte, vai me proteger dos inimigos.

[205] Ramos asserts that the river on which Anjo lives is the Tietê, yet the character exits a rowboat at a dock painted with the word "Pinheiros" (0:08:30) (382).

[206] The truthfulness of this admission is highly uncertain. As there is no evidence that he had the opportunity to abscond with some of the drugs, it is possible that Anjo's statement is intended to provide comfort to the dying Japa.

"Ou dos amigos." (0:22:45-0:23:20)

The initial lines present the opportunity for an allegorical reading about the state of São Paulo's rivers, the city more generally, and the need to profit by any means necessary from its decay. By the dialogue's conclusion, however, it becomes clear the ring simply represents the shifting interpersonal alliances and rivalries of the film's narrative.

Fig. 18. Shirley Sombra contemplates the ring (0:22:45).

Although its production design occasionally mirrors the aesthetics of *Blade Runner*'s science-fictional Los Angeles, Botelho's work engages minimally with critical dystopia. Whereas Scott's classic film foregrounds considerations of hope, doubt, and disillusionment, *Cidade oculta* highlights the predetermined construction of fictional cinematic narrative. The potentially potent symbols of authoritarianism, cultural amnesia, and environmental decay in São

Paulo introduced early in the film ultimately function primarily in service of the film's straightforward plot. The obfuscation of narrative details and anti-illusionism of the bookended framing device further disconnect the film from allegorical critique and subtly discourage dystopian thinking about the cinematic city. *Cidade oculta* remains a visually engaging and skillfully stylized work, yet it complies fully with the aversion to politics that Stam et al. identify as a cornerstone of post-modern Brazilian cinema (435). As a result, the film's São Paulo exists as a hermetic space isolated from the social critique common among subsequent cinematic depictions of the megacity.

Confinement and Catastrophe in *Um céu de estrelas* (1996)

An early standout work of the *retomada*, Tata Amaral's début feature *Um céu de estrelas* (1996) proffers a hopeless vision of São Paulo and Brazil in the late twentieth century.[207] Though considered a single work, the film in fact contains two sections. Francisco César Filho's short, poetic prologue opens the film, while Amaral helms the far longer, narrative section that takes place entirely in a modest home in the working-class Mooca neighborhood. Both Fernando Bonassi's homonymous source novel and Jean-Claude Bernardet and Roberto Moreira's screenplay suggest connections between the interpersonal drama that drives the narrative and larger social trends in São Paulo.[208] The plot details Dalva's (Leona Cavalli) imprisonment by

[207] Born in São Paulo, Tata Amaral (1960-) studied cinema at ECA/USP before beginning her career as a director. After finding critical success with her short films, Amaral moved to full-length production with *Um céu de estrelas*. She has subsequently directed five features, all of which take place in São Paulo. Amaral's work typically centers female perspectives and creates links between interpersonal drama, the legacy of the military dictatorship, and the social divisions of the contemporary megalopolis ("Tata Amaral").

[208] Bernardet is among the pioneering critics of Brazilian cinema, a frequent collaborator of Amaral's, and the director of the non-fictional collage film *São Paulo sinfonia e cacafonia*

her ex-fiancé Vitor (Paulo Vespúcio Garcia) over the course of a single day and night.[209] Having won a scholarship to continue studying hairdressing in Miami, Dalva readies herself to abscond from São Paulo the following day. Tragically, her dream ends in a flurry of violent abuse. Having recently quit his job as a metallurgist, Vitor enters the protagonist's apartment unsolicited, murders her mother (Néa Simões), and forces her to perform oral sex at gunpoint. Dalva manages to shoot and kill her tormentor at the film's conclusion, yet her empty expression captured by news cameras as police swarm the apartment attests to her despair.

Fig. 19. News cameras capture Dalva's despair (1:01:30).

(1994). Moreira, who also co-wrote Amaral's *Antônia* (2006), has directed two features set in the megalopolis: *Contra todos* (2004) and *Quanto dura o amor?* (2009). Both men also served as faculty members at ECA/USP.

[209] Though credited as Alleyona, the lead actress now goes by Leona Cavalli. As character names do not appear in the credits, some critics use alternate spellings for the male lead. I choose to emulate Amaral's spelling in her retrospective essay on the film.

The film's dramatic arc juxtaposes Dalva's post-utopian aspirations of social mobility against Vitor's nihilism. Whereas the protagonist seeks freedom from poverty and oppressive gender roles, her ex-fiancé abandons all pretentions of personal growth to violently assert his masculine dominance. Still, Dalva's desire to leave Brazil without informing those around her reveals her dubiousness about the possibility of a better life in São Paulo. The film's prologue extends this sense of fatalism beyond the apartment's walls, tying the characters' disillusionment to the megacity's history of immigration and expansion. São Paulo's capitalist identity fueled explosive economic growth, yet the city's working class remains impoverished and confined to degraded neighborhoods. Those immigrating to São Paulo sought a better life, but such dreams are impossible in the alienated, violent city of *Um céu de estrelas*.

The film's prologue confounds expectations of a straightforward adaptation of Bonassi's novel. For Marcus Bastos, the scenes directed by César Filho "fazem um comentário imagético sobre o ambiente em que o filme se desenvolverá, vinculando-se, então, à evolução da história" (77). While the critic's reference to "história" refers the film's diegesis, the prologue likewise ties the brief chronology of *Um céu de estrelas* to São Paulo's legacy of exponential growth. The first images are archival photographs. A droning sound plays, accompanied by light percussion and a dissonant accordion. Three portraits with stamps visible on the right side of the frame appear in succession. The implication is clear: the photographs represent historical immigration documents. The next two images depict an extended and nuclear family before a final photograph of an official document brings this initial sequence to a close (0:00:00-0:01:00). In a single minute, César Filho grounds the film's portrait of hopelessness in São Paulo's history of demographic and economic growth.

After a fade to white, Cesar Filho presents a series of moving images. At first, a static camera observes an abandoned factory. The words "Mooca, São Paulo 1996" appear at the bottom of the frame (0:01:10-0:01:20). This neighborhood occupies dual roles in the contemporary imaginary of São Paulo as a locus of immigration and manufacturing hub. Pedro Plaza Pinto notes, however, that the early 1990s represented "um momento histórico de abandono e decadência para fins de gentrificação que seria levada a termo nos anos seguintes" for Mooca and the city's eastern zone (151). The rest of the cinematic prologue highlights this state of disgrace. An increasingly propulsive drum rhythm accompanies a series of industrial landscapes, close-ups of individuals whose emotions range from stoicism to despair, and extremely low-angle tracking shots that accentuate the height of the neighborhood's buildings (0:01:20-0:07:00). This section outlines the social context and geographical area in which *Um céu de estrelas* takes place. Unemployment is common, opportunities for social advancement are few, and the bonds of community and family glimpsed among the opening photographs are now nonexistent. The low-angle shots of buildings connote a sense of isolation and entrapment that prefigures Dalva's inability to escape São Paulo. Devoid of a literal or metaphorical horizon, the film's working-class characters have no cause to engage with utopianism.[210]

[210] The final image of Cesar Filho's prologue at first appears to contradict this conclusion. A man rides a motorcycle down a cobblestone street while a static camera focuses on the horizon ahead. After a few seconds of straightforward progression, however, the man begins to slowly drive in a circle (0:07:00-0:07:30).

Fig. 20. A factory and hazy skyline in *Um céu de estrelas*'s prologue (0:01:05).

Amaral opens the film proper with a flourish of color that contrasts with the black-and-white opening sequence and the similarly colored title cards. Dalva, her nails painted red, applies lipstick in a mirror with her hair wrapped in a yellow towel (0:08:35-0:08:45). Bathed in natural light, the young woman stands and packs her framed degree and passport in a symbol of her initially hopeful outlook. An apparently non-diegetic *brega* song begins to play: "Um dia eu vou voltar a ser feliz, esquecer o passado...." (0:09:30-0:10:00).[211] In a rare break with the protagonist's perspective, the camera lingers and peers out the window when Dalva leaves her bedroom to answer the doorbell. The director describes filming this shot in a secondary location with "uma ampla vista, para explicitar um momento em que Dalva sentia esperanças, tinha um horizonte à sua frente" (32). This symbolism is clear, yet a highway threatens to obscure much of

[211] *Brega* is a style of Brazilian pop music characterized by exaggerated, romantic themes.

the horizon visible to the right of the large, dilapidated neighboring house. One of the neighbors then yells at a girl to turn off her music, revealing that the *brega* song was in fact diegetic (0:10:00-0:10:30). This surprise reveals the limitations of the viewer's perspective and suggests the tenuousness of Dalva's optimism.

Fig. 21. The camera peers out of Dalva's bedroom window (0:10:10).

After Vitor murders her mother, Dalva realizes that her dreams will not come to fruition. She engages in extended, animalistic sex with her former lover before threatening him with a knife (0:36:00-0:40:30). This paired hedonism and violence establishes an ambiguous tone only curtailed by the arrival of the police, who cut power to the building. The lights of their vehicles bathe the apartment in blue for much of the next fifteen minutes. During this largely monochromatic section, Dalva repeats a prayer uttered by her mother earlier in the film in an

extended close-up (0:50:35-0:51:30). The immobility of the shot contrasts with the wavering, handheld camerawork of prior scenes and emphasizes the protagonist's acceptance that her earlier ambitions are no longer viable. When power at last returns to the apartment, Vitor scrambles to barricade the door. Dalva, on the other hand, begins to twirl (0:54:30-0:54:50). The protagonist no longer seeks personal advancement but rather rotates in place. Despite her optimism as the day began, Dalva must kill her former lover just to survive the night.

The protagonist initially embodies post-utopian yearning for social ascension despite her implicit pessimism about life in São Paulo. The extremely alienated Vitor, on the other hand, triggers what Amir Labaki calls the film's "longa descida aos infernos." Before her mother's murder, Dalva explicitly describes her ex-fiancé's anti-social behavior: "Você sempre acha que sabe que é bom para todo mundo. Se acha melhor que todo mundo. Sufoca os outros, me sufoca. Foi você que estragou tudo. Você não sai, não conhece ninguém, foge de todo mundo. E a gente cada vez mais neste fim de mundo" (0:29:40-0:30:00). Though he retained work as a metallurgist until five days before the events of the film, Vitor exemplifies an exaggerated version of the social and economic alienation common in São Paulo. Unable to sustain social ties or imagine a better future for himself, the character embraces radical nihilism and seeks only to exert his will over the former lover who spurned him.

Um céu de estrelas is plainly pessimistic about the future of São Paulo and Brazil to a degree rare among the other works analyzed in this dissertation. The history of immigration that fueled the megacity's rise culminated in alienation, poverty, and ruin. Meaningful change remains extremely unlikely within the city's confines, making emigration a logical solution for those who retain hope for a better life. Those without such dreams, on the other hand, experience excessive alienation capable of stimulating violence. In an interview with Cléber Eduardo,

Bernardet describes his belief that, "não há libertação. Há um fechamento do processo. O [s]imbolismo é evidente. . . . Tudo tem de ser resolvido se não se posterga. E no roteiro a protagonista nem saia de casa. Acaba na cozinha. Não queríamos que se projetasse nada para o futuro, mas a Tata Amaral acho[u] muito duro" ("Entrevista"). Amaral's decision to add a post-credits scene of Dalva leaving her apartment accompanied by police does reference the character's tenuous freedom yet provides no evidence that her future will improve upon her past.

More impactful are the occasional moments of anti-illusionism that establish "uma relação de não passividade do espectador" (Amaral 38). The final such instance arrives when a crew from the exploitative, lurid news programs glimpsed throughout the film records Dalva in the wake of Vitor's death. The protagonist sits at her kitchen table, gun in hand, for nearly two minutes. Positioned on the left of the frame, Dalva alternates long glances at Vitor with stares directly into the camera. Her eyes reveal a mixture of fear, anger, and resignation (1:10:20-1:03:00). Though she never speaks, this subtle incursion on the fourth wall attempts to make the viewer aware of their relationship with the events depicted onscreen. The protagonist's eyes suggest the need for dystopian thinking about the social dynamics that permit extreme inequality and conspicuous brutality to flourish in São Paulo. Such reflection on gender violence, social alienation, and poverty is invariably worthwhile. Still, *Um céu de estrelas* includes little specific criticism capable of inspiring utopian imagination.

Circling the Drain in *O cheiro do ralo* (2007)

Strange, absurd, and darkly funny, Heitor Dhalia's *O cheiro do ralo* (2007) extrapolates the trajectory of a subject who deeply internalizes São Paulo's hegemonic, capitalist ideology.[212] Adapted from Lourenço Mutarelli's 2002 novel of the same title, the narrative traces Lourenço's (Selton Mello) devolution from cold, calculating pawnbroker to spendthrift sadist. As the protagonist fails to repair the titular clogged drain and attempts to "purchase" the *bunda* of an unnamed waitress (Paula Braun), he loses his prior focus on extracting profit and begins a series of cruel and violent interactions with desperate clients. The diegesis incorporates punishment for these sins as an exploited young addict (Sílvia Lourenço) murders her tormentor in cold blood. Alongside this narrative disavowal of Lourenço's exaggeratedly reified worldview, Dhalia incorporates critical elements satirizing the unflinching consumerism typical of contemporary São Paulo. While the pawn broker remains consistent in his search for varied forms of domination, *O cheiro do ralo* successfully encourages dystopian thinking about the exploitative, dehumanizing culture allowing Lourenço to thrive.

Dhalia structures the film around a series of interactions in the industrial space where Lourenço conducts his business. Heloisa Pisani notes how these scenes' repetitive nature draws attention to *O cheiro*'s use of a single warehouse in Mooca for nearly every interior sequence. Although unquestionably a result of the film's low budget, the similarity between the various sets creates a vague sensation of entrapment and alienation (74-76). The exterior locations

[212] Born in Rio de Janeiro and raised in Recife, Heitor Dhalia (1970-) first worked in advertising in São Paulo before beginning his career as a filmmaker. Dhalia served as assistant director on Aluísio Abranches's *Um copo de cólera* (1999), adapted from Raduan Nassar's novel, before débuting his first feature film, *Nina*, in 2004 ("Heitor Dhalia"). Alongside Lourenço Mutarelli, who provided animation for *Nina*, Dhalia has collaborated with the *paulistano* novelists Marçal Aquino (on several scripts including *O cheiro do ralo*) and Fernando Bonassi (on 2018's *Tungstênio*).

consist largely of industrial parks and anonymous walls, compounding the monotonous palette and overall aesthetic of enclosure. Nonetheless, Dhalia and his team adopt a precise approach to cinematography, editing, and structure that highlights moments of deviation. These instances critique the protagonist's fatalism and amplify his rare moments of self-reflection.

Unexpected images, like the single shot of the exterior of Mooca's Clube Atlético Juventus that situates the film in São Paulo, gain additional resonance through contrast with the film's repetitive structure and production design (0:09:20). A preference for medium shots and multiple, fixed angles calls the viewer's attention to these rare cinematographic shifts, often used to reveal the nihilism that undergirds the protagonist's impartial façade. Consequently, handheld scenes that break from this pattern immediately suggest Lourenço's loss of control. The film's structure and editing are similarly precise. The ticking pocket watch heard during the first client meeting foreshadows the tightly controlled five-act structure delineated by the appearance of intertitles. Further, Dhalia separates several major narrative events by almost exactly thirty minutes as Lourenço buys a glass eyeball that externalizes his worst instincts, gives the young addict money to expose herself, and pays to observe the waitress's behind over the course of an hour. Though the protagonist's cruelty becomes more extreme, this careful timing underscores the ideological consistency between coolly extracting profit and wantonly exerting power.

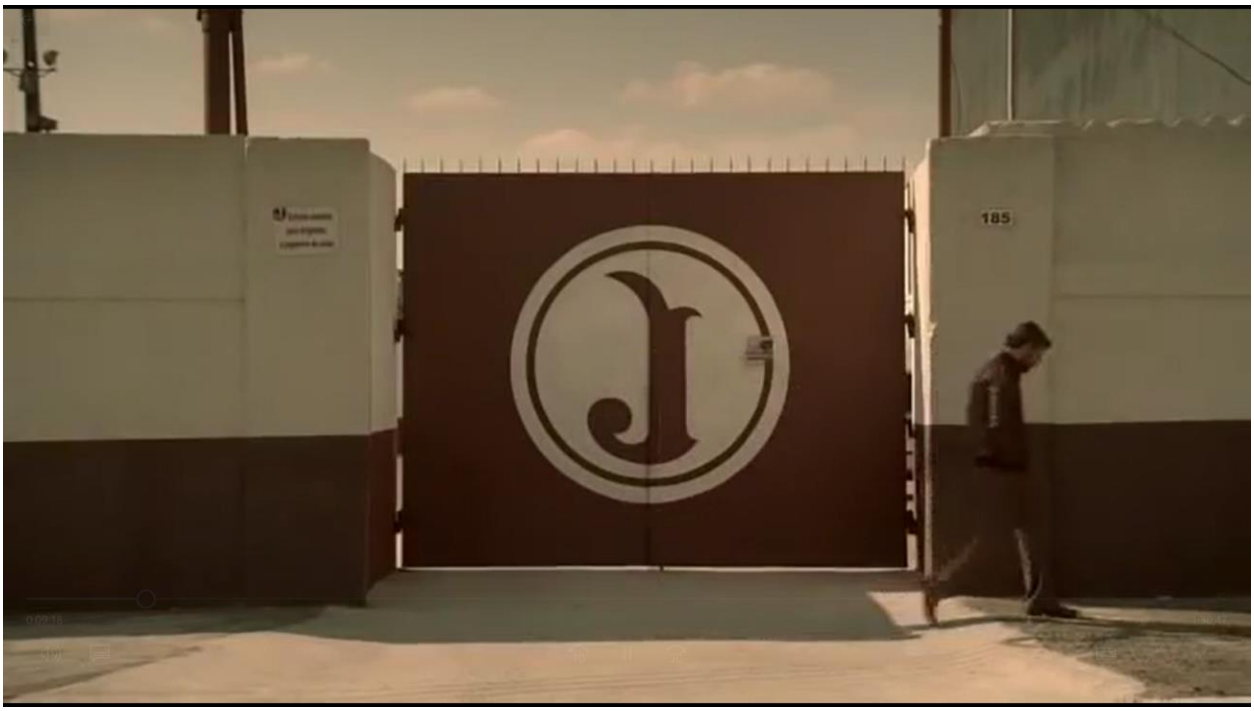

Fig. 22. Lourenço strides past a gate adorned with Clube Atlético Juventus's logo (0:09:20).

O cheiro do ralo's precise construction encourages critical distance on the part of the viewer despite the influence of Lourenço's voice-over. Although Cynthia Tompkins argues that the film conforms neatly with Deleuze's concept of the action-image wherein "the whole aim of the film is only the exposition of a reasoning," the director uses visual language to spur dystopian thinking about the protagonist's self-justifications. Lourenço describes himself as a mere pawn whose cruelty results from the irresolvable tensions between paradisiacal *bunda* and infernal drain. Even as the film incorporates subjective shots from Lourenço's point-of-view including a fantastical image implying that the devil inhabits the warehouse's pipes, however, Dhalia simultaneously presents counterevidence undermining the character's claims (0:58:45). Despite the occasionally convincing nature of the protagonist's rationale, the filmmaker

successfully underscores the need for critical reflection about his consistent cynicism and its connection to São Paulo's liberal capitalist ethos.

For the protagonist, the relationship between *bunda*, drain, and glass eyeball is obvious. The paradisiacal posterior first appears interspersed with the opening credits. Clad in Hawaiian-themed shorts, the *bunda* occupies nearly the full frame. Slack guitar music reminiscent of this archipelago plays on the soundtrack (0:00:30-0:02:00). The same sequence includes a point-of-view shot revealing the character's influence on this exaggeratedly laudatory vision of the derrière. Shortly thereafter, Lourenço tells the waitress (now clad in an Aloha print dress), "Se a comida daqui fosse boa, o paraíso seria aqui" (0:14:32-0:14:38). The drain, on the other hand, begins as a source of shame and transforms into a malevolent force. Just before he pays the young addict to strip for the first time, the protagonist tells two confused plumbers that São Paulo's drains are portals to hell. The same speech transforms into narration as, after a cut, Dhalia's camera pans slowly from right to left in the dark until reaching the bathroom, now empty, smoky, and bathed in red light projected from beneath the drain (0:58:20-0:59:00). The same voice-over also associates the glass eye with hell, a connection that Lourenço extends in conversation with a client when he states: "o olho do dólar é olho de Deus, e esse aqui é olho do Outro, do Outro" (1:06:40-1:06:54). Lourenço's mission to commodify and purchase the fabled *bunda* intertwines the divine dollar and heavenly posterior. So united, the character hopes, these symbols will overwhelm the demonic power of drain and eye.

Fig. 23. The *bunda* in festive shorts (0:01:00).

Dhalia lends a degree of credence to this belief yet recurrently undercuts Lourenço's claims that these symbols exist in direct opposition. In the film's final moments, the filmmaker implies that possessing the *bunda* indeed radically altered the character's outlook before reaffirming his fundamental depravity. As Lourenço walks to work the following morning, he no longer appears as a diminutive figure framed against high walls. Instead, he fills the frame as the camera pans right to left to trace his approach to the warehouse. While all who previously enter the warehouse pass by a brown, circular symbol to the left of the door, the protagonist now approaches from the right (1:31:35-1:31:50). This brief sequence seems to inquire whether Lourenço, was, in fact, correct that buying the *bunda* would be a panacea for his alienation and cruelty. The answer arrives rapidly as the addict enters the office and shoots him twice. In his dying moments, the protagonist crawls toward the drain, lying prone against the floor in a visual

parallel with his position as he embraces the waitress's nude derrière (1:33:30-1:35:00). The camera focuses on his face in a tight close-up before cutting to the glass eyeball. Like the *bunda* during the opening credits, the glass sphere occupies the full frame. After another glimpse of the pawn broker's face, Dhalia includes a final shot of the warehouse exterior (including the brown circle) before cutting to the waitress's exposed behind (1:35:00-1:35:30). This final synthesis of the film's circular symbols affirms their unity. Lourenço's explanation of his actions thus draws from a mistaken interpretation of opposition. Ultimately, his grand aspiration of buying the *bunda* exists firmly within the prescriptions of São Paulo's capitalist culture. Trapped in an endless cycle of alienated and alienating consumption, the protagonist remains unable to conceive of social relations based on principles other than reification and exploitation. The unified symbols reveal the strict limits of imagination in a culture that has deeply internalized the concept of TINA.

Fig. 24. Lourenço reaches for the drain in his dying moments (1:34:20).

Alongside the visual parallels between *bunda*, drain, eyeball, and warehouse exterior created through cinematography, editing, and production design, Dhalia includes two moments of direct ideological critique. In a rare instance of apparent sincerity, Lourenço describes his descent into cynical disillusionment. Sitting for a rare conversation with the woman who cleans his apartment (Paula Preta), Lourenço blames the stinking drain for the collapse of his engagement. The maid (whose name is Josina and not Luzinete, as the protagonist originally claims) asserts that inaction only made the problem worse and asks why he failed to repair it immediately. In response, a dejected, smoking Lourenço describes how his career required a single-minded focus on extracting profit:

> Quando comecei a trabalhar, eu tinha que ser forte, tinha que ser frio porque eu compro as coisas das pessoas. Eu tinha que oferecer um valor bem baixo para poder ter lucro.

> Mas no começo tinha pena das pessoas, mas não podia ter pena, se não, não ia chegar onde cheguei. Aí eu comecei a ficar frio, cada vez mais frio, fui ficando cada vez mais frio. (0:51:25-0:51:30)

This monologue, first shot in close-up and then in a medium shot that includes Josina, reveals the character's conscious acceptance of the capitalist logic typical of São Paulo. This choice to prioritize profit above affect triggered Lourenço's slide into cynicism and exaggerated his social alienation. In this fully reified social landscape, ownership is paramount. Even as he wastes money while grieving his initial failure to commodify the *bunda*, Lourenço aspires for nothing more than exerting dominion over his desperate clients.

In the film's other instance of explicit critique, Dhalia returns to the *noir*-influenced image of a somber Lourenço smoking in close-up. After re-opening the drain and indulging the pleasure of exploitation, the protagonist appears exhausted. He trudges to his truck while non-diegetic, somber piano music begins to play. A cut reveals the character in tight focus. After a drink of liquor, he begins to narrate: "De todas as coisas que eu tive, as que mais me valeram, das que mais sinto falta, são as coisas que não se pode tocar, são as coisas que não estão al alcance das nossas mãos, são as coisas que não fazem parte do mundo da matéria" (1:07:40-1:08:00). Ironically, Dhalia cuts directly to Lourenço leaving his car and re-entering the warehouse, reaffirming his ongoing ability to compartmentalize this critical insight. The protagonist's awareness of having internalized pernicious *doxa* fails to trigger further utopian thinking. Still, this dissonance serves as a dystopian warning about accepting a status quo defined by exploitation and alienation.

The customer interaction following this reflective interlude further underlines the protagonist's cynicism. The smiling client displays a music box, pretending to conduct a portion

of Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake" as Lourenço looks on sternly. The seller insists that the box is valuable due to its history, yet the pawn broker repeatedly insists that it only reminds him of the jingle played by trucks that sell gas in the megacity. Though the protagonist patronizingly mocks the idea that the item's history or sentimental value would have any impact on its price, the man begrudgingly agrees to sell. As the client leaves, Lourenço tells him that if he still wants to hear the song his mother used to play on piano, he only needs to wait for the gas truck to pass by (1:08:15-1:10:30). The scene exemplifies what Eliana de Almeida calls "o efeito de apagamento de memórias, de história, sentidos e tradições, etc., pela banalização e coisificação das relações pessoais, dos *valores morais e sociais*, a ponto de tudo tornar-se, para Lourenço, mercadoria de compra" (122). This conscious internalization of São Paulo's amnesic ethos facilitates the protagonist's exaggeratedly reified worldview. His disregard for history, also reflected in his repeated false claims that the glass eyeball once belonged to his father, allows Lourenço to profit yet precludes critical engagement with past and present. Unable to apply post-utopian thinking to his life or society, the protagonist single-mindedly seeks to dominate others by purchasing their time, bodies, or belongings.

Even when Lourenço chooses to humiliate or degrade a client at the expense of extracting profit, his actions underscore the connection between wealth and power in the megalopolis. For Ricardo Fabrino Mendonça, the protagonist's consistent lack of empathy reflects "uma das facetas mais duras do capitalismo contemporâneo, que impessoaliza as fontes da opressão e transforma em mérito a resiliência de alguns diante da aspereza do mundo" (351). This self-centered, anti-social outlook, summarized in the protagonist's repeated affirmation that "A vida é dura," assumes that life is a zero-sum competition between individuals (Mendonça 358). Those most able to excise emotion and embrace capitalist *doxa* become victors. Their spoils include

wealth and the consequent ability to purchase anyone or anything they desire. Those without capital or the cold-heartedness necessary to attain it are morally inferior and thus fully responsible for their own misfortune. Unworthy of pity, they are condemned to repeat a Sisyphean process of constant selling. Utopianism has no place in such a society; accumulating capital and exerting power over the powerless are life's only possible aspirations.

Despite this paradigmatically anti-utopian dynamic at the heart of the film's exchanges, Dhalia leaves room for hope. The film's construction amplifies the dissonance between Lourenço's narrated justifications and his consistent cruelty. Despite the protagonist's protestations, he is not possessed by a devil inhabiting the titular drain. Instead, he long ago sacrificed empathy by choosing to conform unquestioningly with São Paulo's ideological status quo. Though he maintains the capacity for self-reflection, the pawn broker fails to reimagine or contest the exploitation that sustains his power. The *bunda* never offered salvation but rather a brief sense of relief at having commodified and consumed a potentially meaningful romantic relationship. Lourenço's nihilism ultimately prevents any chance of consequential change within the film's diegesis. Still, *O cheiro do ralo*'s embrace of dystopia grounded in ideological critique implies that a more equitable São Paulo remains possible.

Post-utopian Tactics in *Não por acaso* (2007)

The opening shots of Philippe Barcinski's *Não por acaso* immediately establish São Paulo as a central figure.[213] Though initially foreboding, the film's megalopolis is far from hopeless. Unquestioning conformity indeed breeds atomization and discontent, but the city's unceasing flow of traffic and individuals produces opportunities to forge unexpected social bonds. A critical approach to the megacity's dynamism allows the film's dual protagonists to convert adversity into meaningful interaction that promises a less alienated future. The characters' respective trajectories center their struggles to learn from the past and engage with social dreaming in the face of isolation and tragedy. Though their achievements are limited in scope, the film's parallel structure indicates that such post-utopian thinking can catalyze disalienation on a wider scale. Barcinski makes no reference to the possibility of a radical utopian horizon, but his portrait of a chaotic megacity conjures a sense of optimism grounded in the characters' ability to achieve incremental improvement within the status quo.

The film's initial sequence predicts the challenges faced by the characters as they look to form and sustain interpersonal ties. The whirling of helicopter blades and radio chatter accompany an extended aerial shot. Skyscrapers crowd the frame yet the sky appears only in the upper margin (0:01:00-0:01:45). As Nichile eloquently describes, the city appears as "um labirinto interminável de cinza" (112). The high-angle shots and slow pans that follow this initial

[213] Born in Rio de Janeiro, Philippe Barcinski (1972-) studied cinema ECA/USP before gaining recognition for his short films including "A escada" (1996), "Palíndromo" (2001), and "A janela aberta" (2002), all of which use space to reflect existential dilemmas. "Palíndromo" takes place in São Paulo and centers the alienating dynamics of labor in the city. After *Não por acaso*, Barcinski directed his second feature, *Entre vales* (2012), which depicts the protagonist's trajectory of loss and redemption largely in rural spaces. The director has since focused on directing for television, bringing his distinctive visual style to *novelas*, miniseries, and the second season of Netflix's dystopian, Young Adult series *3%* ("Sobre Philippe Barcinski").

take create the impression of São Paulo as a massive panopticon by approximating the perspective of surveillance cameras. However, no human figures appear as a constant flow of automobiles in traffic dominates the cityscape (0:01:45-0:02:22). The megacity's rhythms are tightly prescribed and closely observed, leaving little opportunity for individual creativity or utopian imagination.

Fig. 25. Central São Paulo viewed from above (0:02:15).

São Paulo's design poses obvious obstacles to social connection, yet the film's dual narratives illustrate the impact of committed, hopeful thinking. One of the film's co-protagonists is Ênio (Leonardo Medeiros), a traffic engineer whose melancholy demeanor, drab wardrobe, and unfurnished apartment convey his extreme social alienation. After his ex-wife dies in a traffic accident, Ênio meets his teenage daughter Bia (Rita Batata) for the first time. Despite initial awkwardness, the two quickly develop a warm relationship. After initially rejecting Bia's

plan to move into his new apartment, Ênio changes his mind and intentionally creates a traffic jam so that he can intercept his daughter before she leaves Brazil for a year studying abroad. The parallel storyline centers around Pedro (Rodrigo Santoro), a carpenter and amateur snooker player whose girlfriend Tereza (Branca Messina) dies in the same accident that kills Ênio's ex-wife. The grieving young man inherits the role of landlord to the commodities trader Lúcia (Letícia Sabatella), with whom he eventually falls in love. Lúcia spends the night at Pedro's apartment, but grows uneasy as Pedro acts in an overbearing manner. Regretting his conduct, the carpenter runs to deliver coffee to her apartment. Due to the traffic jam caused by Ênio, he arrives first and leaves a thermos that Lúcia enjoys upon arriving at home.

The optimism of the film's dual conclusions does not negate the challenges of life in São Paulo but rather illustrates the possibility of improving one's life by negotiating the megacity's obstacles. Both Ênio and Pedro begin the film as incorrigible creatures of habit who largely follow prescribed uses of space. Before connecting with his daughter, the engineer only appears in his sparse apartment and dimly lit office, suggesting the fundamental importance of work in his daily life. The character's profession connects him to Lefebvre's concept of conceived spaces, while his passion for traffic reveals his commitment to facilitating pre-established patterns of movement. Though he appears to derive pleasure from his work, his unquestioning conformity fuels his obvious social isolation. Ênio only breaks from this carefully prescribed routine in the final sequence. Having perceived a previously suppressed a utopian impulse towards affect and connection while spending time with Bia, the protagonist employs his professional skills and deep knowledge of the city's spaces to reaffirm his commitment to his daughter.

Pedro, while more socially adept, is nonetheless similarly devoted to his preestablished routine. This disinterest in breaking old habits deprives him of any impetus to seek out new experiences and leaves him isolated after Tereza's unexpected death. Like Ênio, the carpenter remains steadfastly dedicated to his work. Though his late father wanted to relocate, Pedro resists his employee's call to move the carpentry studio to increase productivity. Instead, he continues to live adjacent to his workshop even when Tereza encourages him to move into her more luxurious apartment (0:23:40-0:24:00). The workshop persists as a heterotopia of restraint and stability within the perpetually changing cityscape. Though Pedro rejects São Paulo's typical focus on profit, his quotidian conformity leaves little chance for social dreaming or otherwise pursuing new opportunities. Still, careful planning and a frugal lifestyle cannot prevent change in a metropolis characterized by unpredictable interactions like the collision that ends Tereza's life.

As he pursues Lúcia, Pedro must balance his reverence for history with a renewed focus on the future. The same drive that led the carpenter to preserve his father's shop manifests as he restages of moments that brought him joy in his prior relationship. Though the commodities trader enjoys hiking to the Pico de Jaraguá mountain and perceives it as a spontaneous act, she becomes alarmed upon discovering that Pedro and Tereza took an identical photograph in the same location. As the new lovers wake up together for the first time, Pedro insists on making an omelet as Tereza once did for him. Although his actions are well-intentioned, his sudden change of course in the final sequence reveals a newfound commitment to creating memories with Lúcia and deviating from the path established by his former romance. The results of this fresh engagement with cautious social dreaming remain unknown, but the future augurs well for the new couple.

Barcinski traces Ênio's path from conformity to aspiration in more detail, illustrating how an engineer dedicated to controlling urban chaos belatedly decides to assert his will on the city. Though his ex-wife's death exemplifies the possibility of unexpected tragedy in the megalopolis, this same dynamism also creates unforeseen opportunities for inspiration and connection. Ênio's narrated analogy comparing humans in traffic to water in pipes extends to the delicate equilibrium between aspiration and resignation in *Não por acaso*'s São Paulo:

> Somos todos partículas. Átomos. Elementos químicos, células, pessoas. Nos locomovemos. É isso que as partículas fazem. São atraídas e repelidas. O ar vai do quente para o frio. As cargas elétricas, do positivo para o negativo. Os planetas se atraem. E nós, os indivíduos, para onde vamos? Temos o livre-arbítrio. Vamos para onde queremos, o que torna nossos fluxos bem mais complexos de se organizar. O modelo matemático do trânsito é o mesmo da dinâmica dos fluidos. A água correndo pelos canos. Cada carro é como se fosse uma molécula de água. O espaço entre eles é a pressão, poucos carros, pouca pressão e o trânsito flui bem. Se a água é represada, muitos carros, pouco espaço entre eles, mais pressão. Só que a cidade não é apenas um cano, é um emaranhado de canos com água correndo para diferentes direções. (0:08:50-0:09:45)

Initially, Ênio represses his own free will. His ascetic lifestyle prevents distraction from his professional function of optimizing traffic efficiency in the megacity's web of freeways. As the engineer narrates the above section of a professional report, the camera assumes a bird's-eye-view of the city that reflects his technocratic vision of São Paulo. Though the camera retains its orientation during a left-to-right pan, the image of the city rotates. The first few rotations pause after ninety degrees, yet the turning accelerates as Ênio concludes his narration. Though the initial image mirrors the engineer's emotional remove, the final gyration represents the entropy

produced by the megacity's dynamism. His ex-wife's death and Bia's arrival destabilize the character's formerly static self-image, challenging him to resist redoubling his alienation and use his free will to forge meaningful social ties.

The character's carefully constructed routine begins to change as he builds a warm relationship with Bia. Barcinski uses the composition of the frame, lighting, and mise-en-scène to link his daughter with aspects of the city that Ênio ignores in his typical routine. As the film proceeds, the filmmaker balances the sharp angles and metal bars of São Paulo's cityscape with natural forms including the sky.[214] This shifting dynamic between manmade structures and nature mirrors the engineer's struggle to commit to hopefulness and creates a parallel with the digital images included in *Babel*. While earlier shots reveal the bland decoration and dark colors of the engineer's apartment, Barcinski repositions the camera to reveal sizeable windows during the daughter's first visit (0:38:30-0:39-15). Later, the young woman gifts her father a houseplant that symbolizes the engineer's attempts to grow (1:04:30-1:04-35). When father and daughter first walk on the Minhocão elevated highway (on a Sunday when it is closed to automobile traffic), a handheld camera initially places them against a wall of skyscrapers before revealing a sliver of horizon (0:45:45-0:47:00). When Ênio feels more comfortable (after a conversation about his profession), the pair move to a balcony and observe the city. An extended pan divides the frame between the skyscrapers and blue sky, suggesting the protagonist's personal horizons are expanding (0:55:45-0:56:45).

[214] The scene where Pedro and Lúcia visit the Pedra de Jaguará similarly places the jagged form of São Paulo's skyscrapers above a line of verdant forest and below blue sky (0:58:45).

Fig. 26. Ênio and Bia converse (0:39:00).

Despite these clear signifiers of newfound aspiration, recurrent shots of grates and bars imply Ênio's doubts about meaningful change.[215] Maria Ignês Carlos Magno compares the tenuous nature of this hopefulness to the engineer's report on fluid dynamics and the relationship between urban and natural space in the film, arguing that, "A cidade é parte da natureza. Na natureza, tudo pulsa" (154). This inevitable entropy reaches its culmination as Ênio reneges on his promise to move in with Bia due to doubts about his own ability to change. In the aftermath of this incident, the camera depicts the character alone between a series of intersecting vertical and horizontal bars in his own apartment (1:08:15-1:08:45). Still, Ênio engages critically with

[215] Examples of such bars include the grate at the entrance to a highway overpass and the bars on the windows of an apartment the pair visit together (0:54:30, 1:05:00-1:05:10).

this renewed feeling of isolation and works towards ensuring an improved future for Bia and himself. Breaking with years of conformity, he risks his career to maintain his budding relationship with his daughter. In a symbol of his success, the pair return to the Minhocão in the film's final scene. Though the protagonist previously declared disinterest in learning to ride a bicycle, the pair now pedal together down the freeway. The characters pass the camera, likewise travelling slowly down the overpass, heading towards a horizon where blue sky remains clearly visible above the walls of skyscrapers (1:19:10-1:19:50).

Fig. 27. Father and daughter bike down the Minhocão (1:19:50).

Moments of social harmony are rare in *Não por acaso*'s São Paulo. Carefully prescribed de Certeauian strategies encourage isolation and commitment to work. This underlying impulse towards conformity, however, does not overrule the possibility of post-utopian aspiration. Both

Ênio and Pedro learn from tragedy and resist the temptation to retreat into reclusiveness despite their inclinations towards routine. Barcinski acknowledges the tenuousness of any social dreaming in the megacity, yet the film's generally optimistic outlook stands in contrast with many other literary and cinematic works analyzed in this dissertation. For the film's middle-class characters, at least, an incrementally better future remains firmly within reach. While entropy will inevitably cause further change, post-utopianism can successfully establish new interpersonal connections, reshape uses of space, and diminish social alienation.

Sacrifice and Solidarity in *Bróder* (2010)

At the turn of the twenty-first century, ECA/USP student and director Jeferson De assumed a leading role in the struggle to increase Afro-Brazilian participation in national cinematic production.[216] De's "Gênese do cinema negro brasileiro," known as the Dogma Feijoada manifesto, ignited debate at the eleventh Festival Internacional de Curtas Metragens de São Paulo in 2000. Inspired by the Dogme 95 movement spearheaded by Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg, De established seven key criteria for black, Brazilian cinema:

> (1) O filme tem de ser dirigido por realizador negro brasileiro; (2) O protagonista deve ser negro; (3) A temática do filme tem de estar relacionada com a cultura negra brasileira; (4) O filme tem de ter um cronograma exequível. Filmes-urgentes; (5) Personagens

[216] Born Jeferson Rodrigues Rezende in Taubaté, SP, Jeferson De (1968-) is a leading Afro-Brazilian director. De published the Dogma Feijoada manifesto while a student at USP ("Jeferson De"). Shortly thereafter, he directed several short films: "Distraída para a morte" (2001), the partial adaptation of *Quarto de despejo* "Carolina" (2003), and "Narciso rap" (2004). Alongside activity as an editor, producer, and director of television, De has directed four features to date: *Bróder*, *O amuleto* (2015), *Correndo atrás* (2018), and *M8: quando a morte socorre a vida* (2019). With the exception of the Santa Catarina-set horror film *O amuleto*, De's features center on the struggles of Afro-Brazilian characters seeking social advancement.

> estereotipados negros (ou não) estão proibidos; (6) O roteiro deverá privilegiar o negro comum brasileiro; (7) Super-heróis ou bandidos deverão ser evitados. (Carvalho and Domingues 4)

Alongside the "Manifesto do Recife" read at that city's film festival following year, Dogma Feijoada raised awareness of the major barriers faced by the nation's few Afro-Brazilian directors as well as the frequently stereotypical portrayal of black Brazilians onscreen.[217] As the plastic artist and founder of São Paulo's Museu Afro-Brasil Emanoel Araújo enthusiastically notes, De became a symbol of hope for greater racial equality in national cinema: "Bravo, Jefferson [sic] De! Você é nossa grande esperança" (16). De's début feature film *Bróder* (2010) departs at points from the pure vision of the Dogma Feijoada manifesto yet remains an important testament to the power of aspiration in the face of long odds.[218]

Viewed through the lens of the director's biography, the diegesis of his début feature *Bróder* (2010) at once affirms the importance of peripherical, Afro-Brazilian utopianism and suggests the unlikelihood of widespread reform. Written by De and Newton Cannito with collaboration from Ferréz, the narrative occurs over roughly twenty-four hours. Macu (Caio Blat) celebrates his twenty-third birthday at his family home in Capão Redondo while negotiating a debt with local gangsters. Two of the protagonist's childhood friends return for the celebration.

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[217] The "Manifesto do Recife" is a 2001 document decrying the exclusion of Afro-Brazilians in all areas of the national audiovisual industry. Notable members of this community who signed the document include Milton Gonçalves, Antonio Pitanga, Ruth de Souza, Léa Garcia, Maria Ceiça, Maurício Gonçalves, Norton Nascimento, Antônio Pompêo, Thalma de Freitas, Luiz Antonio Pilar, Joel Zito Araújo, and Zózimo Bulbul (Carvalho and Domingues 6-7).

[218] The most obvious point of divergence between manifesto and film is the race of the protagonist, though Diony Maria Soares also associates Elaine (Cintia Rosa) with a stereotype of unaffectionate Afro-Brazilian women and notes that the actor with the darkest skin tone (Du Bronks) plays a cruel criminal (118-119).

The dissatisfied Pibe (Silvio Guindane) lives in central São Paulo and works as an insurance broker whereas Jaiminho (Jonathan Haagensen) is a successful professional soccer player based in Spain. Compounding conflicts propel the story: Macu butts heads with his stepfather Francisco (Ailton Graça), the protagonist's half-sister Elaine (Cintia Rosa) is pregnant with Jaime's child, and the criminals ask Macu to kidnap his newly wealthy friend. The characters meet varied fates. Pibe and Elaine find no resolution for their respective problems. Jaiminho, on the other hand, receives an invitation to the national World Cup squad. Macu decides not to betray his friend and, having made peace with Francisco, dies confronting the gangsters.

Bróder avoids exaggeratedly dystopian aesthetics and undue optimism alike. Although the film's villains lack redeeming qualities, the other characters possess virtues and faults in equal measure. De foregrounds his criticism of the material conditions of the *favela* while subtly referencing the ideological conformity that underpins the city's deep socioeconomic divides. At the same time, he fails to challenge the stereotype that impoverished communities should join in common sacrifice so that those few individuals whose talents are most valued by the market may escape. Music and family remain powerful sources of solace and inspiration, yet *Bróder* offers little reason to believe that local solidarity can do more than save a precious few from the crime, poverty, and disillusionment common in São Paulo's periphery.

The contrast between the film's initial and final shots illustrates the impact and limitations of utopianism in *Bróder*'s Capão Redondo. In the opening moments, Macu awakens on the floor of his bedroom. Dim light passes through a dark curtain. The protagonist opens the door to leave while the handheld camera shifts rightward to highlight the expansive *favela* beyond his door (0:02:15-0:03:30). A new day begins for the protagonist, yet the only alternative to the darkness of isolation is the endless, gray poverty of Capão Redondo. The final frames

likewise position Macu in a doorway as he bleeds heavily on the precipice. His shallow breaths and whimpers dominate the diegetic soundtrack as the camera slowly zooms out (1:23:00-1:23:20). Due in part to Macu's choice, Jaiminho achieves his lifelong ambition of playing for the *seleção* and will doubtless serve as a symbol of possibility for future generations. Just prior, De frames the soccer player against the architecturally striking Octávio Frias de Oliveira bridge as he cries tears of celebration (1:22:00-1:22:20).[219] Still, the camera's return to Macu reaffirms the rarity of Jamie's triumph. A select few from São Paulo's periphery do achieve their dreams, provided they do not meaningfully contest the preexisting balance of power. More frequent, however, are trajectories of resignation and wanton death.

[219] The same bridge also appears as a signifier of modernity in the unnamed, urban setting of Fernando Meirelles's dystopian drama *Blindness* (2008, adapted from José Saramago's *Ensaio sobre a cegueira* [1995]) and an identifying marker of São Paulo in Marco Dutra and Juliana Rojas's *As boas maneiras* (2017).

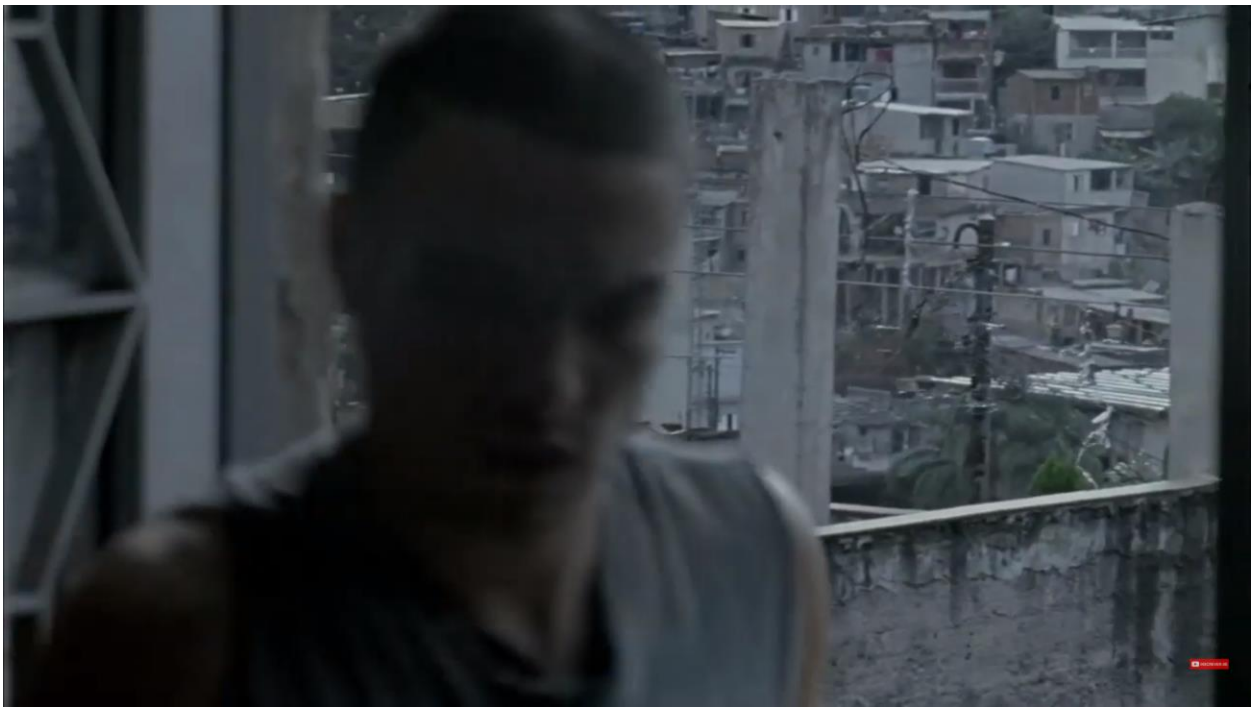

Fig. 28. A *favela* framed through Macu's doorway (0:03:25).

De remains critical of the institutions supporting Jaime's rise to prominence. While the soccer star achieves an otherwise unlikely level wealth and fame, his business manager Paulo (Gustavo Machado) represents the continued prejudice and paternalism that he continues to face. This character first speaks after Jaime passes a medical exam, criticizing the character's continued loyalty to his friends and family in Capão Redondo: "Ah, porra, Jaiminho! Não acredito que você vai largar o filé de Les Jardins por uma feijoada no Capão. Ô, é muita vontade de ser pobre hein" (0:09:15-0:09:25). Agent and player share a friendly rapport, yet the white, bourgeois agent's words lay bare his desire to disconnect the soccer star from the impoverished periphery. When Jaime fails to communicate with his manager during a night out, Paulo appears in Capão Redondo. When the player asks him for a loan, he harshly criticizes both his client and Elaine: "Sabia que essa putinha ia te pedir dinheiro. Porra Jaiminho, vou ter que castrar você,

cara. É isso" (1:14:40-1:15:05). This sexist and racist comment reinforces the comparatively elite character's total disinterest in the ongoing struggles faced by those living in the periphery. Jaiminho is merely a resource to be exploited. His dream is only worth supporting due to its potential profitability.

Fig. 29. Jaime celebrates being called up to the *seleção* (1:21:25).

The filmmaker also connects Paulo to an implicit critique of the viewer. Beige and gray dominate the film's color palette, bridging interior and exterior sequences representing day and night. The only sequence that breaks from this color scheme by foregrounding bright, natural tones showcases Paulo and his family at a country club. After Jamie answers his phone call, the camera cuts to the manager on a vivid, green fairway with blue sky overhead. De emphasizes the contrast between the two locales by cross cutting between luxurious exterior and drab interior as

the two men converse. The camera pans left to right as Paulo strolls in front of an expansive, open space backed by rolling hills. After a cut, he kisses his attractive, blonde wife on the head (0:38:40-0:39:35). The juxtaposition between claustrophobic, bleak Capão Redondo and the lush vista of upper-class São Paulo could hardly be more apparent. The brilliant colors and attractive lifestyle on display subconsciously draw the viewer to identify with Paulo despite his recurrent, abhorrent comments. For an attentive and empathetic spectator, at least, this undesirable sense of familiarity creates the opportunity for self-reflection and social criticism.

In a later scene, De redoubles this emphasis on critique. The three central figures visit a strip club-cum-brothel where Macu secretly meets with the local crime boss. As his friends drink and watch the dancers, the protagonist proceeds to the office of the *gaúcho* capo Doutor Venceslau (Antônio Petrin). The man sips from a large *cuia* as he introduces himself in a monologue. The camera at first cuts between the two men before assuming the crime boss's perspective as he observes the protagonist from a high angle. After a medium shot of Venceslau, De returns to a point-of-view shot once more before the conversation concludes (1:00:30-1:03:00). Despite their brevity, these paired shots immediately call the viewer's eye due to the absence of similar takes in the rest of the film. The camera most often follows Macu, as exemplified by the extended tracking shot as the character walks through Capão Redondo during the opening credits, yet the viewer never sees through his eyes (0:03:30-0:06:00). Instead, De employs a point-of-view shot for a minor character whose social status more closely mirrors that of the average viewer. The subtle indictment of the spectator centered on Paulo becomes more apparent as the camera assumes the perspective of another powerful, white man. The fact that Venceslau is a criminal who denies personal responsibility for the crimes he oversees provokes

further consideration of those whose conformity allows the film's exploitative status quo to flourish.

Bróder accepts the unlikelihood of near-term change for the residents of São Paulo's periphery yet highlights music as a possible source of future utopian inspiration. Hip-hop songs repeatedly create opportunities for quotidian interpersonal bonding based on shared struggle and mutual affection. Throughout the day, it becomes clear that the three central friends have grown apart due to the stresses of career and family. Despite these tensions, hip-hop music allows the friends to reconnect. As they drive to the strip club, they rap to Racionais MC's "Fim de semana no parque." De places the three friends in the same frame to visually underscore their unity (0:56:30-0:57:45). The lyrics' celebration of simple joys in the rappers' native Zona Sul creates an obvious parallel with the characters' attempt to enjoy a rare night out together. Although the lyrics included in *Bróder* are optimistic, the Racionais MC's success as a socially critical hip-hop group disseminated marginalized, Afro-Brazilian utopianism throughout Brazil to an unparalleled degree. Like Adirley Queirós, De incorporates the work of local rap luminaries to underscore a similar, critical message while highlighting hip-hop's ability to unite peripherical communities.[220]

Whereas De otherwise highlights the social divide between (presumably upper- or middle-class) viewer and peripherical characters, the spectator's likely enjoyment of hip-hop alludes to a potential sense of community that transcends background. Nonetheless, predetermined structures of class reinforced by São Paulo's urbanism severely limit the impact of this bonding. *Bróder* avoids projecting anti-utopianism but recognizes the individualization of

[220] Another scene includes Silvera's "A vida no gueto" as a diegetic track while De uses a series of rapid cuts to emphasize the friends' harmonious movements (1:09:25-1:10:00).

contemporary aspirations rooted in São Paulo's marginalized communities. Jaime's success confirms that select, highly profitable talents offer the chance of social ascension, but most of Capão Redondo's residents have little chance of achieving their goals. Instead, they must sacrifice to facilitate the exit of these lucky few. A mass movement grounded in common aspirations might yet institute widespread change in the periphery, but such unity is largely absent from De's film.

Social Descent and Creeping Despair in *Os inquilinos* (2009)

Sérgio Bianchi has remained one of Brazil's most iconoclastic, stylistically experimental, and unabashedly critical filmmakers since the 1970s.[221] Questions of national culture and identity predominate in the director's career, though São Paulo is a recurrent setting and the only location of *Os inquilinos* (2009). In his monograph on the filmmaker (published before the release of *Os inquilinos*), João Luiz Vieira describes Bianchi's impulse towards "essa aguda e urgente necessidade de questionar simultaneamente o país – em suas tragédias nacionais, econômicas, culturais e sociais – e a linguagem cinematográfica" (10). The specific targets of the director's critique vary significantly, yet socioeconomic inequality, official hypocrisy, and exploitative public and private institutions are frequent themes. Tatiana Signorelli Heise argues that *Os inquilinos* stands apart from Bianchi's filmography due to its relatively conventional

[221] Born in Ponta Grossa, Paraná, Sérgio Bianchi (1945-) moved to São Paulo in 1969 and studied at ECA/USP. Though Bianchi explores different geographical regions and the concept of Brazilian national identity in subsequent works, he remains explicitly political and sharply defiant no matter the specific subject matter. The mixture of non-fictional and fictional generic conventions is likewise a hallmark of the director's career. Bianchi's filmography includes *Maldita coincidência* (1979), "Mato eles?" (1982), "Entojo" (1984), *Romance* (1988), *A causa secreta* (1994), *Cronicamente inviável* (2000), *Quanto vale ou é por quilo?* (200), *Os inquilinos (os incomodados que se mudem)*, and *Jogo das decapitações* (2013). (J. Vieira 163-168; "Sergio Bianchi").

narrative, visual style, and infrequent invocation of dark humor (110). While this perspective underestimates the film's consistent if subtle defiance of aesthetic and generic convention, *Os inquilinos* remains firmly grounded in the history and sociology of early twenty-first-century São Paulo. The film's use of dystopian thinking corresponds with J. Vieira's observation that Bianchi's oeuvre is "um cinema da distopia, onde o desencanto acompanha a reflexão enviesada sobre tudo aquilo que não deu e nem dá certo" (10). Although violence and fear curtail social dreaming within the diegesis of *Os inquilinos,* the director creates productive tensions between the working-class protagonist's growing fatalism and the viewer's impulse towards social and ideological critique.

Bianchi co-wrote *Os inquilinos* with novelist Beatriz Bracher, whose experiences teaching adult education classes directly inform portions of the story (Rajca, "Urban Imaginaries," 182). The setting is an unspecified, working-class *bairro* where manual laborer Valter (Marat Descartes) lives with his homemaker wife Iara (Ana Carbatti) and their two children.[222] The titular tenants are three raucous young criminals from an imposing, expansive *favela* just beyond the neighborhood's limits. Once the young men move into the neighboring house owned by the elderly Seu Dimas (Umberto Magnani), their disruptive presence compounds Valter's pre-existing stress rooted in his demeaning job and night classes. Eventually, one of the tenants violently murders Seu Dimas and the young men are arrested. There is little relief for Valter or his family, however, as Dimas's ex-wife Consuelo (Cláudia Mello) arrives one morning with a caravan of heavily armed young men from the "Partido de Paz, Justiça e Liberdade para a Comunidade de Vila Imperial" that stands in for the powerful

[222] Filming took place in Brasilândia in São Paulo's Northern Zone (Rajca, "Urban Imaginaries," 183).

PCC criminal organization (1:37:00). Gang violence recurs as a leitmotif, yet this final scene predicts its permanent presence in Valter's neighborhood. Taking a break from scrubbing her ex-husband's blood from the home's entryway, Consuelo nonchalantly informs the protagonist that new tenants will arrive shortly (1:36:30-1:37:15). Valter turns and trudges towards the bus stop, seemingly accepting his social decadence and the futility of utopian aspiration in the megacity's periphery.

The camera unfailingly accompanies Valter throughout the film, observing his daily life and occasionally projecting his subconscious in surrealist and dream sequences accentuated by superimposed images and unsettling sound design. The protagonist's near omnipresence encourages identification between the character and viewer and reveals the logic behind his ultimate disillusionment. Still, Bianchi simultaneously creates critical distance between spectator and protagonist. By highlighting the themes of sight and blindness through framing, camera angles, and dialogue, the director accentuates the film's artifice and invites further reflection about Valter's beliefs. By the film's conclusion, the viewer must negotiate the opposing outlooks represented by the protagonist's resignation and his daughter's naïve optimism as heard during the film's opening scene: "A história é de uns homens maus que chegam numa cidadezinha calma, bagunçam tudo. No final eles morrem, todo mundo fica feliz" (0:03:35-0:03:45). While such purely happy endings are impossible in the São Paulo of *Os inquilinos*, Valter's anti-utopian conformity is equally exaggerated. Violence, poverty, and political impotence undermine peripherical utopianism, yet Bianchi suggests that productive aspiration may yet emerge through a commitment to ideological and social critique.

The film opens with a sequence of three shots that reveal the importance of perspective in *Os inquilinos* and foreground the class disparity between Valter and Iara's neighborhood and the

bordering *favela* (0:00:30-0:01:30). A piano repeats a cycle of four chords, sonically suggesting the impossibility of significant change. Positioned far from the community, the camera centers a single tree amidst a wall of taupe-colored homes. As Maia Aguilera Franklin de Matos evocatively describes, "a favela estoura o enquadramento, se expandido para além dos limites da câmera" (2). A cut reduces the size of the tree even as the frame remains filled with homes. Although the first shot implies a degree of hopefulness by emphasizing vegetal life, the second shot reveals the rarity of trees in the periphery. A fade reveals a horizon at sunrise, again suggesting cause for optimism. Bianchi again undermines this symbol of hope, however, by positioning the *favela* across the entire foreground.

Fig. 30. A lone tree stands in the extensive *favela* (0:01:00).

These initial images resonate over the course of the film as the *favela* comes to symbolize Valter's growing feeling of entrapment. The opening shots alert the viewer to the community's importance and draw attention to its subsequent appearances onscreen. Throughout the narrative, recurrent images of the *favela* visually suggest that the community is creeping consistently closer to Valter's neighborhood. Rather than representing movement, though, this shifting perspective demonstrates the protagonist's influence on the frame. As Valter cleans his car (an unused symbol of diminishing middle-class status), one tenant gently mocks the aging vehicle (0:29:00-0:29:15). The *favela* first appears in the background to the right of the frame before a cut situates the beige wall of homes directly above the protagonist's shoulders. Despite Valter's efforts to retain his position in the megacity's fiercely contested social hierarchy, he cannot distinguish himself from the community he views as inherently poor and rife with criminals. Later, Valter imagines a scene where the tenants degrade Seu Dimas. A slow, discordant piano plays as the neighbor confronts the young men on his patio at night. The camera remains focused on the character, yet the unmistakable lights of the *favela* fill the background of the frame as the young men accost their landlord and insult him with heavily distorted voices (1:07:00-1:07:15). The expansion of the hillside in this imagined sequence reaffirms that the shifting geography of the periphery draws from the protagonist's psyche.

Fig. 31. The neighboring *favela* framed above Valter's shoulders (0:29:10).

After Dimas's murder, the *favela* briefly recedes into the background. Valter walks onto his patio, where a wall and fern obscure much of the community (1:31:20-1:31-30). The fence and the neighboring house create two visual planes between the viewer and the nearby hillside. Valter's fear has dissipated and he feels in control of his domain once more. The concluding scene, however, leaves no doubt that the *favela* has already overtaken the imagined borders of the *bairro*. The settlement remains limited to the corner of the frame during Valter's dialogue with Consuelo, yet Bianchi creates a sense of proximity by having the wall of auto-constructed homes completely block the horizon (1:37:00). This image serves as a microcosm of what Ana Paula Pachecho terms the film's "contrautopia . . . o processo de descoberta, por parte do protagonista, da vizinhança entre o homem comum e o criminoso, entre normalidade, submissão e perversão" (154). As Valter leaves home and begins his commute, he embodies resigned

conformity with this decadent status quo. The imposing presence of the impoverished, criminal *favela* no longer present cause for alarm but rather immutable reality.

The film's scenes set in adult education classes tie the protagonist's class anxiety to liberal, capitalist ideology. The most impactful sequence set at the Escola Municipal Paulo Freire highlights Valter's prejudice during a class on Ferréz. Bianchi cuts from the protagonist feebly attempting to convince his boss to register him as an official employee to the classroom interior. A handheld camera observes a literature professor (Claudia Kiss) writing furiously on the whiteboard. The words "a voz da periferia" appear in the center of the frame, with "Capão Pecado" visible just above (0:51:30). The camera zooms in on the professor's face as she recites a section of Ferréz's "Uma poesia nova:"

A vida é externa, a guerra já começa em nós por dentro.

A paz é uma palavra muito curta para fazer efeito.

A sensação de ter asas não me agrada mais, quero rastejar.

. . .

Os livros bem pensados são prostitutas bem pagas pela vaidade.

A diferença dos medíocres, é que eles sabem capitalizar no caos.

Deus me acordou cedo hoje, e me disse para calar a boca.

Como sempre no mundo, a teimosia gera o bom senso.

. . .

Entre sons e uma leve chuva, a coisa mais sem sentido é olhar a verdade.

Embora quisesse parar, agora sei que não se para o sangue. "Uma nova poesia (inédita)" The selected verses comprise the poem's more conceptual critiques, excluding sections directly juxtaposing poetic imagination and the intellectually numbing Brazilian media. Still, the poet's

impulse towards creativity forms an obvious point of contrast with Valter's instinctive social conservatism.

The protagonist's internalization of São Paulo's hegemonic *doxa* grows increasingly clear as the class discusses "Uma poesia nova." Valter is the first to comment after the recitation, asking, "Ele é desses caras que acham que matar é normal, né?." This presumptuous question ignites a debate between the protagonist, his outspoken colleague Evandro (Caio Blat), and the professor. Evandro identifies Valter's prejudice and argues that the verses posit the need for critical engagement with the reality of the periphery. Incensed, the protagonist redoubles his initial presuppositions, "tem gente que prefere ser rato, cobra. Gosta de ficar no chão" (0:51:30-0:54:05). Evandro again challenges the protagonist before an unnamed classmate proclaims, "Tua cabeça está debaixo do chão irmão. Enterrada" (0:54:11). Valter's insistence on defining himself as inherently superior to those he perceives as belonging to a lower socioeconomic class reveals an internalized association between wealth and morality. Until the closing moments, at least, Valter retains this blind faith in São Paulo's supposed meritocracy and continues to assume the worst about the *favela*'s impoverished residents.

The professor continues her analysis of the poem yet takes offense when Evandro argues that society values the lives of the rich more than those of the poor. After rebutting his argument and accusing the passionate young man of unjustly targeting the wealthy, the professor rests her hand on the shaved head of an Afro-Brazilian student. This gesture symbolizes her hypocrisy and undercuts her good intentions. Though she originally contests Valter's argument, the professor simultaneously and subtly reinforces class and racial hierarchy in the classroom. For Matos, the protagonist and the professor both embody prejudices naturalized through ideology:

> Como Valter, repetimos dispositivos implantados pelo Estado em nossa maneira de pensar. Perdemos a vontade de conhecer esse outro, que afinal de conta somos nós mesmos. Encurralados pela violência e o medo que suscita a cidade, repetimos a imagem do 'favelado' construída pelos agentes do Estado (a polícia, a mídia e mesmo a educação), sem coragem de reconhecer-nos neles e poder imaginá-los ou imaginar-nos de maneira diferente. (17)

As the educator removes her palm from the man's scalp, a bomb explodes outside and a plume of flame becomes visible through the windowpanes. Valter looks towards the back of the class with wild eyes, as if asserting his own righteousness to the viewer (0:54:15-0:55:55). Shared *doxa* approximate the protagonist, the professor, and the typical spectator, yet Evandro's violent death before the third and final classroom scene proves the accuracy of the character's critiques. This tragic confirmation of the combative young man's perspective reasserts the need to remain critical while viewing a film heavily influenced by Valter's biases.

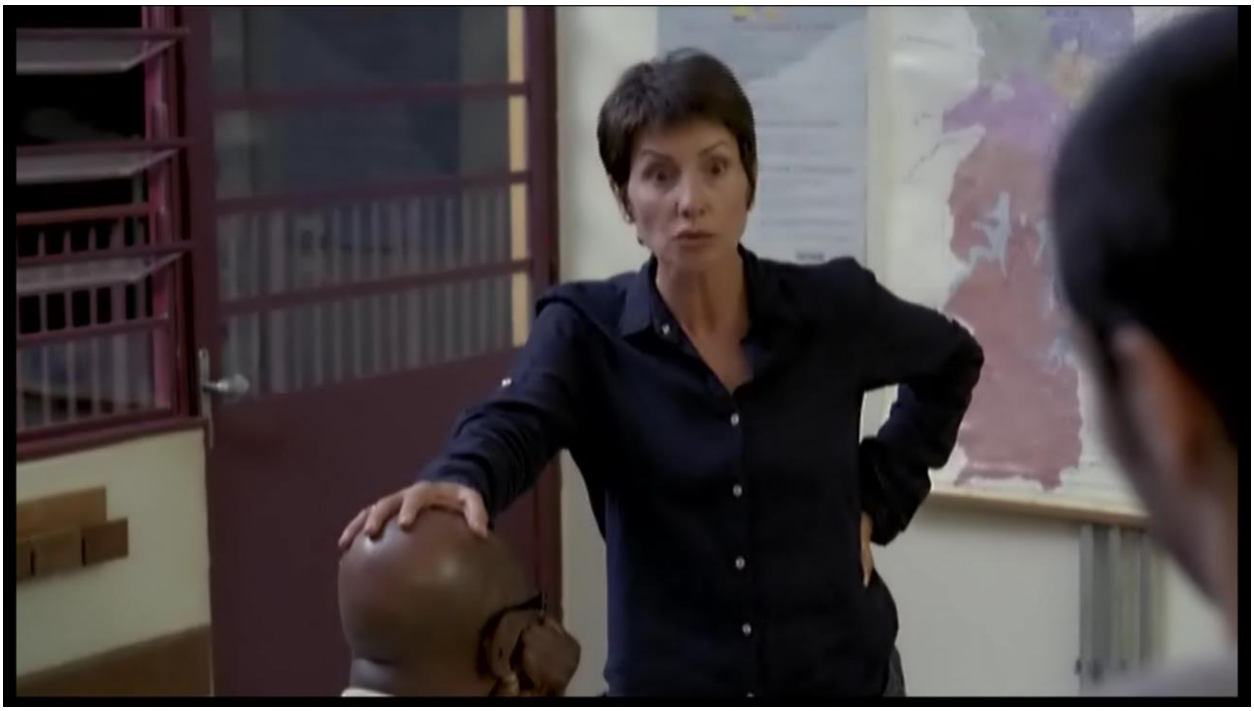

Fig. 32. The professor rests her hand on a student's scalp (0:54:45).

As he converses with a friend about the tenants' misbehavior, Valter makes a comment that synthesizes his counterproductive belief in meritocracy and his fear of the expanding *favela*. After the two men disregard seeking violent retaliation to avoid becoming "bandidos" themselves, Valter states: "Só sei que foi meu pai que construiu essa casa aqui, tijolo por tijolo" (0:59:30-1:00:00). Though a non-sequitur in the context of the conversation, this line of dialogue divulges the roots of the character's prejudices. As Caldeira explains, "For the Paulista working classes, their autoconstructed houses . . . embody statements about belonging to society and being modern, and through their houses their residents develop a discourse about society and about themselves" (263-264). Valter perceives his house as a symbol of his family's social ascension, in turn viewing those without such material comforts as intentionally deviant and immoral. Due to his engagement with a "moral do trabalho, no sentido de que este dignifica e

torna os trabalhadores sujeitos pessoas," the protagonist's own downward mobility is initially inconceivable (Matos 12). Despite his obvious exploitation by his boss, the growing parallel power of the PCC, and the intrusion of *favelados* next door, Valter's sense of superiority blinds him to his own decadence and, later, leaves him impotent to imagine a productive response. Unable to resolve the contradictions between ideology and the changes occurring around him, the protagonist increasingly retreats into violent and disturbing fantasies before meekly accepting his fate.

The high-angle shots that recur throughout *Os inquilinos* highlight the disconnect between Valter and the spectator and underscore the protagonist's disillusionment as the film concludes. Pacheco argues that this positioning "um pouco acima de Valter e das outras personagens, mas não muito" suggests the viewer's tenuous moral superiority (165). To truly distinguish themself, however, the spectator must engage with self-critique in a way Valter never does. The camera's position among the neighborhood's rooftops in the final scene serves as a final reminder of this critical distance (1:37:30-1:38:05). Valter's silent march to work reveals his newfound fatalism as he belatedly accepts the fallacious nature of his prized class status. The character's implied outlook is paradigmatically anti-utopian, yet the visual dissonance between protagonist and viewer represents a final suggestion that all is not lost in São Paulo. Any redemption, however, can only exist outside of the film.

Trabalhar cansa (2011): Fear and Forgetting

The themes of class conflict and labor exploitation in São Paulo connect Marco Dutra and Juliana Rojas's *Trabalhar cansa* (2011) with *O cheiro do ralo, Bróder,* and *Os inquilinos*.[223] This film foregrounds a realist mode but later incorporates horror aesthetics as part of an allegorical critique. The narrative follows middle-class couple Helena (Helena Albergaria) and Otávio (Marat Descartes) as they struggle to retain their place in the social hierarchy during an economic downturn. After Otávio is fired, Helena enters the labor market by re-opening a shuttered neighborhood grocery store and hires Paula (Naolana Lima) as a live-in maid and nanny for their daughter. With business slow and the patriarch unable to secure white-collar work, Dutra and Rojas begin to employ generic elements rooted in horror cinema to hint that something uncanny is afoot. Eventually, Helena discovers the corpse of what appears to be a werewolf encased behind a storeroom wall. The couple rapidly destroy the cadaver, declining to consider the implications of such a beast's existence. This denouement reveals the characters' continued amnesia, disinterest in self-criticism, and single-minded focus on maintaining their class position. Viewed through the lens of the film's allegory, though, the creature's appearance presents an opportunity for critical dystopian reflection about the history of exploitation in São Paulo and beyond.

[223] Juliana Rojas (1981-), from Campinas, SP, and the *paulistano* Marco Dutra (1980-), have consistently worked together since their time as students at ECA/USP. After co-directing several short films, the duo filmed two features: *Trabalhar cansa* (selected for the *Un certain regard* program at Cannes), and the genre mash-up *As boas maneiras* (2017), which evolves from interracial, interclass lesbian romance to werewolf thriller. Dutra has directed two additional features, the psychological horror film *Quando eu era vivo* (2014) and the Uruguay-set drama *Era el cielo* (2016). Rojas has directed a single feature, the musical *Sinfonia da necrópole* (2014), in addition to other short films and work in television ("Juliana Rojas," "Marco Dutra").

Trabalhar cansa introduces the issue of labor in its initial scenes. After Helena tours the market with a real estate agent, she returns home to discover Otávio has unexpectedly been fired. She reacts emotionally, expressing a sense of betrayal that her husband's employer of ten years could be so callous (0:04:30-0:05:00). In her role as a manager, however, Helena adopts similarly cutthroat practices. When she interviews the young, Afro-Brazilian Paula for the role of nanny, the protagonist keeps her waiting before quickly rejecting the possibility of signing a Carteira de Trabalho e Previdência Social (CTPS). With other opportunities for employment rare, Paula resigns herself to an unjust offer of minimum wage (after an unpaid trial month) without the possibility of benefits (0:14:00-0:14:30). Later, Helena discovers a stock clerk has been taking expired products home instead of throwing them away. She berates and fires the young man, screaming at him when he insists his infraction was minor (0:50:00-0:53:00). When the ex-employee returns as a customer, Helena orders a cashier to surveil him and tracks his movement via recently installed closed-circuit cameras (1:17:30-1:20:00). This tense scene scored only by the diegetic buzzing of fluorescent lights underscores the protagonist's rapid embrace of the dispassionate, controlling tactics she earlier scorned. Like Lourenço in *O cheiro do ralo*, Helena indulges her most misanthropic instincts to extract profit and assert her place in the social hierarchy.

This transition from empathetic housewife to insensitive manager functions in service of a wider allegory of class. *Trabalhar cansa* initially appears to be a character study of a couple under mounting financial and psychological stress, yet Dutra and Rojas intersperse details suggesting that their actions represent widespread middle-class dissatisfaction. When Helena conducts interviews prior to the market's opening, she encounters an extensive line outside the store. In the only interview included in the film, a young man describes how the arrival of a

"hipermercado" forced his previous employer to close (0:19:45-0:20:45). Even without further details, the implication is clear: large (potentially multinational) corporations are replacing São Paulo's small businesses and exaggerating inequality in the megalopolis. The unprecedented challenge of hypermarkets represents the growing threat of what J. Souza terms "proletarização" for the city's middle class (160). The market's construction in the late 1950s, the prosperous heyday of national developmentalism, further suggests such an allegorical reading of the labor dynamics on display (0:01:30-0:01:40). These early allusions to class instability tie the central family's anger and disillusionment to a larger turn towards reactionary anti-utopianism.

Otávio's arc likewise remain rooted in recognizable psychology as his sudden loss of status leads the character into depression. The conclusion of his trajectory, though, fortifies the allegorical reading of the film. In an obvious parallel with actor Marat Descartes's role in *Os inquilinos*, Otávio sees his masculinity undermined and his previous faith in meritocracy become increasingly tenuous. In a rare, humorous scene, he feels humiliated by having to participate in a bizarre group interview involving role play with a balloon (0:15:00-0:18:00). After ten weeks of unemployment, he seeks help at a hiring agency but rejects the possibility of attending specialized networking events and psychological consultations (26:10-28:00).[224] Otávio's story functions as a microcosm of what Sérgio Rizzo calls "O vazio de uma sociedade voltada para o trabalho, e que perversamente nem mesmo é capaz de oferecê-lo a todos, [que] pauta todo o andamento do filme." The character's self-worth is so closely tied to his belief in capitalist meritocracy that extended unemployment leaves him socially and psychologically unmoored.

[224] Later, the character accepts a commission-only job in insurance sales but is hampered by his own procrastination and the high unemployment likewise affecting his potential clients (1:02:00-1:03:45).

In the film's final scene, Otávio participates in the type of event he previously disdained. A few dozen men congregate to listen to a seminar titled "Como sobreviver ao mercado de trabalho." Any individual's odds of securing employment are one-in-a-hundred, the speaker proclaims, and the job market is a viciously competitive jungle. The business guru commands the men to unleash their inner animal by yelling at the top of their lungs. The camera pans left across the screaming crowd to find bare-chested, heaving Otávio. After a transition to close-up, the character unleashes three primal screams before the final cut to black (1:33:15-1:36:30). In a parallel with the pre-credits shot of *Um céu de estrelas*, Otávio's eyes reveal a mixture of desperation, anger, and fear. Unlike Dalva, however, his screams aurally express the despair of losing one's long-held aspirations. The collective catharsis of the conference attendees suggests that São Paulo's white-collar workers will redouble their belief in competitive meritocracy rather than engaging with dystopian thinking or imagining new forms of labor relations. Instead of critically assessing his circumstances, Otávio transforms his resignation into rage directed at his fellow job seekers.

Fig. 33. Otávio unleashes his inner animal (1:36:05).

The final scene represents a fitting culmination of *Trabalhar cansa*'s bleak depiction of a resentful and frightened middle-class pushed to the brink by growing inequality. This pessimistic conclusion, though, does not invalidate Paula's unexpectedly happy ending. The film reveals the domestic worker's interest in securing other employment, but it nonetheless comes as a surprise when she appears as a janitor in a mall food court. As she leaves for the day, her manager stops her to return her newly signed CTPS. "Primeiro registro, hein? Agora você existe," he says with a smile before a close-up confirms the young woman's officialized status (1:32:45-1:33:15). On the one hand, this line of dialogue serves as a reminder of the close association between participation in the labor market and one's validity as a human in the megacity. On the other, Paula's ascent suggests that post-utopian aspiration can lead to positive outcomes for the city's working class. This incremental social ascent, which corresponds with the rise from poverty for

many impoverished Brazilians under the Lula regime, represents a tentative improvement within the status quo and serves as a counterpoint to the central family's decadence. The character's success does not, however, represent a meaningful challenge to São Paulo's consumerist culture nor the neoliberal capitalist institutions worsening inequality in the megacity.

The invocations of the horror genre blend *Trabalhar cansa*'s critique of labor exploitation with consideration of cultural amnesia in São Paulo. Mariana Souto notes how the directors' use of extended takes and unpleasant sound heighten the violence implicit in quotidian, contemporary life, yet it rapidly becomes clear that something fantastical and monstrous is at play in the market (46). Unexplained series of events begin to take place. First, what begins as a small, black stain on the market's walls grows incessantly. Later, a handyman extracts a massive clump of black hair from the structure's plumbing (0:40:00-0:40:15). The presence of maggots suggests the hair's biological origin, as do the large, spiked collar hidden in a back room and Paula's discovery of an outsized tooth on the market's floor (1:07:00, 1:16:00).[225] Concurrently, dogs assume an aggressive posture towards the market. Diegetic howls recur on the soundtrack and a snarling pit bull confronts the store employees as they leave work. Later, the same dog repeatedly triggers the motion sensor of the market's kitsch, animatronic dancing Santa Claus without making itself seen (0:44:00-0:45:30). This tense, creepy scene evokes the sensation of an invisible threat central to the horror genre and foreshadows the appearance of a monster later in the film.

Just after firing the stock boy, Helena destroys the oozing wall stain with a sledgehammer. As she reaches inside, a large, hairy corpse falls limply from the wall and topples

[225] Paula's occasional work in the market exemplifies the ways that many domestic employees must perform additional duties outside the home for which they are often not compensated.

the market owner (1:21:00-1:22:15). After Otávio returns home from the couple's country home, he finds his wife sitting alongside the creature's severed paw. The pair extract the rest of the cadaver from the market in a scene sound-tracked by the howls of neighboring dogs before driving in silence to the outskirts of the megalopolis. In a dark, wooded area, they salt the remains and ignite them with a matchbox emblazoned with a stylized Brazilian flag (1:25:00-1:29:00). Whereas the directors initially heighten the drama of this sequence through frames whose coloring approaches chiaroscuro, the couple's return at dawn highlights São Paulo's extensive skyline (1:29:00-1:30:00). The relative quiet and presence of a horizon in these shots at first appear to connote a newfound sense of calm, an impression further implied by brighter lighting in subsequent scenes set in the market.[226] This false sense of resolution, however, dissolves as Otávio's howls reveal his continued anguish.

[226] These shots of the skyline present a clear contrast with the repeated framings of buildings in window frames above the characters' shoulders noted by Nichile (121-124).

Fig. 34. The monster's severed paw (1:25:20).

The buried creature also lends itself to an allegorical reading. For Laura Loguercio Cánepa, the hidden monster represents the legacy of slavery that continues to underpin much of contemporary Brazilian society:

> O fato deles [Helena e Otávio] decidirem, sem maiores explicações, enterrá-lo e não mais tocar no assunto, só reforça a ideia da carcaça como algo que eles desejam esconder de si mesmos – e eu, aqui, 'palpito' que possa tratar-se de uma espécie de metáfora do regime de escravidão, ao qual eles de alguma maneira dão continuidade no modo como se beneficiam da desigualdade social, que tentam preservar a qualquer custo para manter seus privilégios.

This reading, supported by discovery of thick chains in the market's back room and the creature's dark pelt, defines the cadaver as a rare symbol of remembrance in the amnesic

megacity.[227] Seen through this lens, the ooze emanating from the buried carcass presents an uncommon point of *rugosidade* that challenges the film's contemporary subjects to negotiate a historical legacy often viewed as resigned to the past. The immediacy and unspoken nature of their decision to destroy the creature's corpse in a wooded area far from the city center comprises a redoubled commitment to selective oblivion. Their shared, instinctive response reveals that the characters' goal of avoiding *proletariazação* trumps any impulse towards post-utopian criticism or ideological self-critique.

The events of *Trabalhar cansa*'s diegesis offer no reason to believe that São Paulo's middle class will reshape the city's pre-existing social dynamics. Instead, Helena and Otávio intentionally ignore a rare opportunity for social criticism and reaffirm their engagement with the capitalist status quo. Paula's arc represents a retreat from nihilism, yet there is no doubt that such social ascension remains rare. The film's allegory, though, suggests a critical dystopian interpretation that sheds light on middle-class reactionary politics and São Paulo's cultural amnesia. By defamiliarizing the megacity through horror aesthetics, Dutra and Rojas encourage reflection about intentional forgetting and exploitative labor practices rooted in slavery. Although more than a century has passed since abolition, the legacy of human bondage lurks just below the surface of the wealthy, dynamic megalopolis. Given the characters' instinctive destruction of the monstrous corpse, however, there is no doubt that a painstaking process of identifying and rethinking the *doxa* underpinning contemporary society is necessary for a turn to more radical utopianism in São Paulo.

[227] Souto also notes subtle references to indigenous genocide, including the market's name (Curumim, tupi-guarani for child) and the indigenous costume worn by the couple's daughter (53-54). Further, a school play includes a reenactment of abolition with child actors in blackface (0:22:15-0:23:30).

Chapter Four Conclusion

Beyond the initial criteria of critiquing identity, myth, and ideology, issues of class unite nearly all of the films included in this chapter. While many literary depictions of the megalopolis likewise foreground socioeconomic divisions, this theme is especially prevalent among filmic visions of São Paulo connected to the concepts of utopia and dystopia. From this common foundation, though, the selected filmmakers convey fatalistic, hopeful, and ambiguous perspectives about the prospect of a more equitable future for the megalopolis. The city's elite remain largely absent from the included works, suggesting their successful isolation in the bunkerized towers and gated communities Caldeira details in *City of Walls*. As São Paulo's richest families secure previously impossible degrees of wealth and power, the city's middle- and working-classes struggle to retain their increasingly tenuous position in the megacity's hierarchy. Engagement with utopianism could offer an alternative to these exploitative labor dynamics, yet their naturalization by longstanding *doxa* makes such a prospect unlikely.

The relatively apolitical *Cidade oculta* stands out from the posterior films that, irrespective of the degree of credence that utopianism can impact the city, share a baseline of dissatisfaction with the divisions characteristic of São Paulo in the neoliberal era. *Não por acaso* is similarly unique in its suggestion that a recalibration of individual work-life balance can produce significant disalienation. The selected films focusing on peripherical and working-class areas of São Paulo are uniformly pessimistic that such a change of perspective can overcome the material barriers fortifying the socioeconomic status quo. Whereas Ênio can risk his livelihood for interpersonal connection, the marginalized characters of *Os inquilinos* and *Trabalhar cansa* struggle mightily merely to achieve a signed CTPS. In *Bróder*, Macu sacrifices himself so that Jaime can achieve his dreams yet Pibe resigns himself to a life of unhappiness. Barcinski's traffic

engineer is a kindhearted if solitary technocrat, but the petit-bourgeois sadism of Dhalia's pawn broker remains more representative of São Paulo's managerial class across the included works. Though Helena demonstrates emotional intelligence as *Trabalhar cansa* begins, she disregards all solidarity with her employees after opening her market. *Um céu de estrelas* offers minimal hope for the megalopolis's working class as Vitor's nihilism overwhelms Dalva's post-utopian striving. Across the selected works, only *Trabalhar cansa*'s Paula manages to consolidate any degree of social ascent.

Despite the widespread pessimism of the included diegeses, several directors incorporate dystopian narrative or aesthetic elements revealing a degree of hope for a brighter future in São Paulo. Dhalia and Bianchi similarly create critical distance between the spectator and the protagonist's perspective to reveal the fallacy of unquestioning engagement with São Paulo's hegemonic, liberal capitalist ideology. Lourenço's obsession with ownership colors the film's imagery, yet *O cheiro do ralo* undercuts his self-justifications through careful use of visual symbolism, framing, and ironic humor. *Os inquilinos* critiques Valter's firm belief in meritocracy through direct critique and the exaggeration of his fears in dream sequences. Bianchi's careful cultivation of distance between spectator and character creates the opportunity for subsequent reflection about the protagonist's turn towards fatalism. Dutra and Rojas encourage similar critique through defamiliarization and allegory. By interweaving horror elements into a largely realist framework, the co-directors draw on dystopian imagery to reveal the amnesic culture preventing post-utopian aspiration in the megalopolis. The film's allegory of class, on the other hand, reveals growing if still inchoate reactionary tendencies among São Paulo's middle class. Though the film's characters reject the opportunity for self-critique, the spectator might yet engage with post-utopian thought grounded in criticism of labor dynamics in

the megacity's past and present. *Bróder* highlights the exploitation and sacrifice underlying peripherical success stories while suggesting the compliance of the typical Brazilian filmgoer with this highly unequal status quo. De retains hope for São Paulo's marginalized and Afro-Brazilian communities, yet widespread social reform is unlikely without the involvement of the megacity's wealthier residents.

Both conclusive hopelessness and radical utopianism are rare in the selected films. In fact, none of the included works definitively indicates the possibility of revolutionary change in São Paulo. Whereas Brandão and Oliveira suggest (but do not illustrate) the end of the capitalist status quo in their literature, none of the included filmmakers allude to any radical utopian horizon. Although pessimism is common, only *Um céu de estrelas* approaches a definitively anti-utopian denouement. Though Amaral creates a meta-cinematic critique of watching television within the diegesis, the viewer remains impotent even as Dalva's gaze threatens to break the fourth wall. Structural change is necessary to avoid future cases of violence rooted in extreme, working-class alienation yet the director offers no hint as to what form such transformations might take.

Botelho's film eschews the blatant social criticism of the later works yet draws upon dystopian imagery in its portrait of a nocturnal São Paulo. The filmmaker's visual style resonates in the careful compositions of *O cheiro do ralo* while his blending of genres creates a point of connection with of *Trabalhar cansa*. *Cidade oculta*'s elevation of music, though comparatively apolitical, reverberates in the scenes where De's characters bond by listening to hip-hop. The film's straightforward narrative emphasizing adventure, revenge, and sex, on the other hand, stands out from the dour depictions of São Paulo prominent since the *retomada*. While *Cidade oculta*'s ludic dimension might appear as a marker of inconsequentiality by comparison,

Botelho's film might offer a productive avenue for future filmmakers seeking to pair dystopian critiques with positive utopian visions outlining a better future for São Paulo.

CONCLUSION

Dystopias first rose to prominence in the early twentieth century in large part as a reaction to the radical optimism of positivist philosophy. Whereas positivism argues that science and its underlying rationality would spur consistent and continual progress, dystopia harnesses pessimism to redirect focus onto preexisting social problems. The technologically enhanced carnage of two World Wars catalyzed this turn towards skepticism. By the period studied in this dissertation, dystopia had overtaken utopia as a preferred artistic mode and aesthetic around the world. In Brazil, positivism and optimism persevered even as other nations' artists increasingly rejected utopian narratives. The Brazilian flag continues to bear the words "Ordem e Progresso," adapted from positivist philosopher August Comte. The nation's mythologized grand destiny, traceable to first European contact, remained widely accepted until well into the twentieth century. This legacy of *ufanismo*, drawn directly from positivist thought, continued to resonate in works like Zweig's *Brazil: A Land of the Future*, the revolutionary romantic works of early Cinema Novo, and the rhetoric surrounding Brasília's creation. Despite the horrors of indigenous genocide, slavery, and entrenched socioeconomic inequality, many critics, artists, and political leaders evinced belief that Brazilian society would yet fulfill the promise of Pêro Vaz de Caminha's foundational evocation of endless natural bounty.

The military dictatorship heralded Brazil's belated turn towards pessimism. With dissonance between the regime's *ufanista* rhetoric and its authoritarian actions too great to ignore, artists embraced dystopian critique in the form of allegories designed in part to evade censorship and testimonial works directly referencing torture and abuse. Redemocratization represented a clear utopian horizon in theory, but its long-delayed arrival generated continued

skepticism. Still, a return to relative optimism would seem a logical result of the end of dictatorship even as Brazilian democracy failed to meaningfully ameliorate violence, economic inequality, or environmental degradation. As seen in this dissertation, however, unrestrained hopefulness remains rare in Brazilian literature and cinema produced since the final years of dictatorship. Radically utopian visions of Brazil or its cities are particularly infrequent, as writers and filmmakers foreground criticism of existing issues in need of solutions. Some works employ frameworks rooted in dystopia while others rely on the cautiously optimistic process Haroldo de Campos terms post-utopianism. Neither perspective, though, breaks with the baseline of anti-utopianism that Jacoby identifies as a cornerstone of late-twentieth-century global thought. Instead of projecting alternatives meaningfully different than the present, dystopia and post-utopia each rely on what Bourdieu calls the negative function of utopia.

Just as belief in positivism spurred the description of optimistic futures, anti-utopianism has fortified the ongoing prevalence of dystopian pessimism oriented towards incremental reform of the status quo. Dystopia has productively challenged uncritical, positivist belief in progress through science and technology, yet it remains unknown what, if any, form of utopianism could similarly contest the anti-utopian consensus. Can utopia's more positive dimension re-emerge? How can historical forms of revolutionary aspiration inform such a transformation? While radical utopian aspiration remains niche, critical works posing questions such as these have achieved a considerable audience. Tatiana Salem Levy's essays cited in the opening of this dissertation remain prescient, with critics and artists subsequently echoing her call to redouble commitment to utopianism in Brazil and beyond.[228] In fact, I witnessed one such

[228] Alongside Naomi Klein's work cited in this conclusion, Dutch historian Rutger Bregman's *Utopia for Realists* (2016) found an international audience for its considerations of practical proposals like universal basic income, a fifteen-hour work week, and open borders.

argument for a turn towards positive utopianism at UCLA in October 2019. As Brazilian poet Angélica Freitas concluded her presentation on women in contemporary poetry, discussion turned to the changes heralded or accelerated during the first year of far-right president Jair Bolsonaro's governance. The speaker and fellow audience members described the nation's trajectory as dystopian (without my introducing the term) while discussing the environmental destruction, human rights abuses, and unabashed prejudice dominating headlines during the previous months. Although such controversies are an unfortunate trademark of recent conversations about Brazilian politics and society, Freitas brought the session to a close by affirming belief that dystopias are an insufficient medium of literary resistance. Instead, new utopias must suggest original solutions. A few works analyzed in this dissertation provide glimpses of such a possibility. Still, texts and films that depart emphatically from the status quo remain scarce.

Before considering those works that engage with radical hope, several aspects of the included dystopian and post-utopian works merit further reflection. First, these texts effectively interconnect their critiques of national and local questions and themes. The concept of national identity and society resonates across all four chapters. Artists considering Brasília and São Paulo alike negotiate disillusionment with neoliberal capitalism and contest (or accept) the associated phenomenon of anti-utopianism. Brazil's legacy of utopianism likewise resonates among otherwise diverse texts, as do questions about the nation's racial identity. Still, local history and culture consistently influence the contours of the dystopian and post-utopian critiques included in this study. While largely attributable to my focus on two cities, this dynamic nonetheless reveals the importance of local geography and society even for works that foreground national themes. *Não verás* and *Trabalhar cansa* exemplify this relationship by filtering allegorical critique of

issues like environmental degradation, inter-class animosity, and slavery through the lens of contemporary São Paulo. Ultimately, these artists engage with dystopian thinking about abstract concepts like national identity in large part through the filter of local or regional culture, geography, and society. Further comparison with future studies centered on other Brazilian cities will offer additional insight into the relationship between municipal, provincial, and national influences on dystopian and post-utopian representation.

Spatial theory further illuminates the way that specific urban forms inform or reflect utopian thought. The dynamics of contestation central to Lefebvre's representational spaces and de Certeau's strategies create a point of connection between the abstract processes of ideological and post-utopian critique and the concrete experience of moving through a city. Foucault's heterotopias likewise ground these critiques in space by embodying practices or concepts generally absent from a given landscape. These three concepts defamiliarize pre-established, top-down spatial practices and suggest the possibility of incremental improvements within the bounds of the status quo. In the selected works of literature and cinema, engagement with representational spaces, tactics, and heterotopia consistently represents a degree of commitment to utopianism. Unquestioned conformity with conceived spaces and strategies, on the other hand, signifies resignation or disillusionment. These initial points of connection reveal potential avenues for further exploration of the relationship between utopia and spatial theory. For instance, future studies might explore the dual concepts of utopian or dystopian spaces beyond Claeys's list of common dystopian imagery by identifying categories of spaces or specific locations recurrently connected to the process of social dreaming.

Differences between the representations of space in Brasília and São Paulo illuminate the influence of each city's development on contemporary aspiration. Brasília, constructed rapidly in

a rural area, represents a remarkable (if incomplete) attempt to manifest aspirations for a radically different variety of Brazilian city. Works evoking cautious hope for the capital acknowledge the failures of this project yet continue to draw some inspiration from its egalitarian plan, imaginative architecture, or associations with mysticism. Even pessimistic works like *A noite da espera*, *Era uma vez*, and *Insolação* that portray the city's wide expanses as amenable to authoritarian violence, apartheid, and interpersonal alienation reveal an understanding of the originality of the city's design. São Paulo does not share this history of revolutionary urbanism. The megalopolis expanded exponentially in the twentieth century yet the capitalist principles underlying its growth remained largely consistent throughout this period. São Paulo's current sprawl does not remit to any single moment of radical utopian thought but rather represents an extended commitment to persistent *doxa*. The stark divisions symbolized by Tuca Vieira's photograph on the cover of *Ninguém*, Valter's fear of the encroaching *favela* in *Os inquilinos*, and the atomized city of *EEMC* reflect the social inequality necessary for constant economic growth under capitalism. *Não por acaso*'s post-utopian belief that these divisions can be overcome through concentrated striving, on the other hand, illustrates optimism about gradual reform as the city continues to evolve. While Barcinski evinces hopefulness that dedication and time can recalibrate uses of space in the megalopolis, this conviction does not draw on any specific historical precedent and thus diverges from similar portraits of cautious optimism in Brasília.

A similar disparity exists between post-utopia and dystopia disconnected from the concept of space in the respective cities. Literature and cinema depicting São Paulo almost uniformly introduce the theme of utopia by highlighting concrete or ideological consequences of the city's capitalist cultural ethos. Although undoubtedly exaggerated by my selection criterion

prioritizing local identity, this near-unanimous, critical focus on specific aspects of the city's culture as currently experienced differs from the mysterious and fantastical elements tied to the same themes in representations of Brasília. The capital's associations with mystical and egalitarian yearning suggest radical possibilities of social organization visible even in works evincing ambiguous hopefulness or tentative optimism. The lasting influence of Lispector's *crônicas* in works like Almino's novels, *A idade da terra* or Vaz's short films relies on a shared understanding of Brasília as temporally and culturally strange city due in part to its legacy of grand aspiration. In São Paulo, on the other hand, a prevailing acceptance of TINA limits the bounds of local imagination across the included works. Even Nelson de Oliveira's fantastical, revolutionary future draws not from any aspect of local history but rather from an explicit rejection of the city's longtime engagement with capitalism and consumption.

The few texts and films invoking unabashedly hopeful rhetoric and imagery provide sufficient material for a tentative utopian hermeneutic. Brasília's close ties to unbridled social dreaming represent a possible source of inspiration for artists seeking to overcome the anti-utopian skepticism underlying much contemporary cultural production. It is therefore evident that the capital's legacy of grandiose yearning has fortified rather than undermined recent radical utopian thinking. The included work most explicitly tied to the city's original hopes is "Ivy-Marãen," which imagines a future where an egalitarian, technocratic Brasília serves as capital for an advanced, global society. The city has, belatedly, instituted a historical tabula rasa and accelerated the transition towards renewable energy and free access to information. Ribeiro briefly acknowledges Brasília's initial failings but otherwise reaffirms aspirations drawn directly from the imaginations of figures like JK, Costa, and Niemeyer. *A idade da terra* balances moments of pessimism with mystical utopian rhetoric closely paralleling Dom Bosco's heavenly

vision. Rocha's film is minimally prescriptive, yet Black Christ's exaggerated pronouncements join with the director's own narration to suggest that Brasília's origin story should not be discarded as mere fancy. Queirós's *Branco sai* adopts a far more critical view of Brasília while still drawing from this same legacy. The annihilation of the Plano Piloto represents a rejection of the capital's stratified hierarchy, capitalist exploitation, and segregated spatiality. Nonetheless, the film's sonic bomb presents a new, violent tabula rasa that mirrors the intended effect of Brasília's construction. Queirós erases the capital's palimpsest and suggests the dawn of a new, utopian city forged by the communitarian ethos of the impoverished periphery and its music. Though these three works draw from different aspects of Brasília's origins, they each reveal the continued inspirational capacity of these initial aspirations decades after critics proclaimed their conclusive failure.

This repurposing of revolutionary myths perceived to have failed creates a point of resonance with Eduardo Giannetti's *Trópicos utópicos*. In this brief book, the author compiles over a hundred short texts centered on the theme of social crisis in Brazil and abroad. At the work's conclusion, Giannetti argues that the nation's disregarded myths might still form the basis of a belated, Brazilian utopia (170). By embracing *mestiçagem*, the ludic aspects of African and Amerindian culture, and abandoning the concept of GDP, the nation can define new standards for utopian aspiration. Instead of using repression and violence to approximate an imagined vision of Western modernity, Brazilians can draw from diverse yet powerful concepts central to their own culture and become, "Uma nação que poupa, investe em seu futuro e cuida da previdência, mas nem por isso abre mão da disponibilidade tupi para a alegria e o folguedo" (172). At first glance, drawing from a mythologized past might appear counterproductive. As Chauí (among others) convincingly argues, the myth of racial democracy exists primarily to

naturalize inequality under capitalism. Still, Giannetti provocatively reframes the ideal of racial equality as a key component of a larger break from the neoliberal status quo. *Trópicos utópicos* avoids further prescription of the social and political organization of this new Brazil. Still, the work's suggestion that historical ideals might inspire renewed, radical utopianism resonates with the role of Brasília's origin story as seen in Chapters One and Two of this dissertation.

Contemporary literary and cinematic depictions of São Paulo infrequently suggest any revolutionary utopian horizon despite consistent critical engagement with TINA and the *doxa* that naturalize this worldview. Among the selected works, only *Babel* offers any vision of society fully disconnected from neoliberal ideology. This novella's conclusion parallels the radical destruction of *Branco sai*'s final scene yet disregards the possibility of manmade reconstruction. Whereas Queirós's marginalized characters value the culture of the satellite cities, Oliveira's revolutionary vision prioritizes vegetal consciousness. *Babel*'s São Paulo, defined by the pursuit of progress, has no redeeming qualities from which to build a dystopian or post-utopian critique. Instead, the city represents the culmination of a failed civilizational project whose legacy comprises interpersonal alienation and environmental holocaust. The only possible solution is a break from history and a return to primordial harmony with nature.

Though *Ninguém* most often pairs ideological critique and realist dystopia, Ferréz draws inspiration from historical revolutionaries in "Assunto de família." Alongside his literary heroes, the author harkens to figures like Zumbi, Antônio Conselheiro, and Tiradentes as he describes his struggle to maintain hope. Though his discussion of these leaders is brief, the autobiographical narrator mentions their legacies as a reminder of the need to resist fatalism when faced with the stark challenges of life in the megacity's periphery. Such allusions to national symbols of revolution remain rare among the works analyzed in Chapters Three and

Four of this study, yet these references comprise a potentially impactful response to the paucity of local signifiers of radical aspiration. In *Ninguém*, these figures inspire post-utopian aspiration targeted at improving education and expanding awareness of *doxa* within Capão Redondo. Still, these Brazilian revolutionaries could yet spur more widespread social dreaming in the megalopolis.

In *No is Not Enough*, Naomi Klein considers the urgent need to move beyond the neoliberal, capitalist paradigm. Though she focuses on North America and Europe, the relevance of her arguments for São Paulo are undeniable given the difficulty of imagining social alternatives in the included depictions of the megacity. The segregation, ecological devastation, and profound alienation linking dystopian visions of the megalopolis correspond with a widespread assumption that mankind will eventually succumb to civilizational collapse. For Klein, "one of our most pressing tasks is learning to imagine other possible ends to the human story, ones in which we come together in crisis rather than split apart, take down borders rather than erect more of them" (185). Elucidating such objectives has remained the domain of dystopia for much of recent history. The unfortunate prescience and ongoing resonance of works like *Não verás*, though, suggest that such warnings have failed to retard the expansion of environmental crisis and socioeconomic inequality. Reasserting the need for positive utopia, Klein argues that "saying no to bad ideas and bad actors is simply not enough. The firmest of no's has to be accompanied by a bold and forward-looking yes—a plan for the future that is credible and captivating enough that a great many people will fight to see it realized, no matter the shocks and scare tactics thrown in their way" (9). This emphasis on proactive planning breaks with the dogmatic rejection of prescriptive, blueprint utopias rooted in scholarship by figures including Jacoby and Claeys. To be sure, such plans have produced social coercion and considerable

violence. Still, dystopian and post-utopian thinking alone remain limited in their capacity to inspire original alternatives or innovative solutions. Further, their implicit acceptance that much of the status quo is immutable normalizes a baseline of inequality and exploitation absent from more radical social dreams. Such a turn towards prescription might prove helpful for artists interested in envisioning a utopian São Paulo no longer defined by the limits of anti-utopianism and TINA.

Though his election is too recent to influence the literary or cinematic works analyzed in this dissertation, Bolsonaro's presidency has redoubled national and international focus on the dystopian aspects of contemporary Brazilian society. The president's rhetoric represents a novel level of explicit prejudice, while his open support for a return to authoritarianism was previously unthinkable. Still, his government's resolutely neoliberal economic policies, tolerance of Amazonian deforestation, and repressive policing procedures do not represent new frontiers of radicalization but rather a continuation of issues unresolved since redemocratization. The COVID-19 pandemic raging globally at the time of writing, on the other hand, marks a potentially catastrophic crisis point. The full fallout of this novel coronavirus remains unknown, but Bolsonaro's extended denialism does not augur well for its impact in Brazil. Already, though, the disease has further associated the nation with the concept of dystopia. In fact, Brazilian documentarian Petra Costa has begun production on a film about the virus and resultant quarantine tentatively titled *Dystopia* (Dams). Klein argues that such crises present excellent opportunities for redoubled authoritarianism or radical reform. While those in power can push through reactionary political agendas, major social transformations throughout twentieth-century history, "were responses to crises *that unfolded in times when people dared to dream big*, out loud, in public—explosions of utopian imagination" (217). The current pandemic could spark

such a wave of revolutionary aspiration in Brazil. More likely, however, the dearth of radical visions among the works analyzed in this dissertation represents a wider lack of engagement with utopian imagination that will allow this crisis to pass without fundamental reform.

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